THE RELIGIOUS STOIC:

Or a short DISCOURSE ON These several SUBJECTS, *Viz.*

Of Atheism, Superstition. Worlds Creation.
Eternity, Providence, Theology.
Strickness of Churches. Of the Scriptures.
Of the Moral and Judicial Law.
Of Monsters. Of Man and his Creation.
Of the Immortality of the Soul.
Of Faith and Reason.
Of the Fall of Angels, and what their sin was.
Of Mans Fall. Of the Stile of *Genesis*
Why Man Fell.
A Refutation of the *Millinaries*, &c.

With a Friendly ADDRESS to the PHANATICS OF ALL SECTS and SORTS.

By Sir *G. M.*

Ye men of Gallile, why stand ye gazing up into heaven. Act. 1. 11.

Edinburgh Printed, and reprinted at *London*, and are to be Sold by *R. Taylor* near *Stationers-Hall*, 1685.

By Sir Geo. Mackenzie

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THE STOICS FRIENDLY ADDRESS TO THE PHANATICS Of all SECTS and SORTS.

THE *mad-cap Zealots of this Bigot Age, intending to mount Heaven, Elias-like, in Zeals fiery Chariot, do, like fooliſh* Phaeton, *not only fall themſelves from their flaming ſeat, but, by their furious over-driving, involop the World in unquenchable Combuſtions; and when they*

have ſet the whole Globe on a blaze, this they terme a new Light. *It is remarkable in Scripture, that* Jehu, *who drove furiouſly, and called up* Jehonadab *to ſee what zeal he had for the houſe of* God, *we as even at that inſtant, doing it more wrong than ever was done to it by unconcerned* Gallio, *who ſtantingly cared for none of theſe things. And that none of all the Apoſtolic Conclave deſired even fire might rain from above upon mis-believers; except the Sons of* Zebedee; *who immediately thereafter, arrived at that pitch of Vanity, as to deſire to ſit in Heaven upon Chriſt's right and left hand. And that* Peter, *who was the firſt who drew a Sword in his Maſters quarrel, was likewiſe the firſt who denyed him. Fiery Zeal blows ſoon up ſuch combuſtible matter, the Sons of* Zebedee, *and that flaſh being ſpent and evaporated, a fall follows, as befell* Peter. *As that Body is hardly curable, which entertains ſuch ill-ſeated Neighbours as a cold Stomach and an hot Liver; So, the Body of the*

the visible Church may be now concluded to be in a very distempered condition, when it's Charity waxeth cold, and its Zeal hot, beyond what is due to either; and those feverish fits of unnatural Zeal, wherewith the Church is troubled in it's old and cold Age, betokens too much that it draws near it's last period.

The unconsiderableness likewise of our difference, and inconsideratness wherewith they are pursued, induces me to believe, that the Zeal now A-la-mode, *is not that Holy Fire which is kindled by a Coal from the Altar; but is that* ignis fatuus, *or wild-fire, which is but a Meteor piec'd up of Malignant Vapors, and is observed to frequent Churchyards oftner than other places.*

I am none of those who acknowledge no Temples, *besides those of their own Heads. And I am of Opinion, that such as think that they have a Church within their own Breasts, should likewise believe their heads are Steeples, and so should provide them with Bells. I*

believe that there is a Church-militant, which, like the Ark muſt lodge in its Bowels all ſuch as are to be ſaved from the flood of condemnation: but, to chalk out its bordering lines, is beyond the Geography of my Religion. He was infallible who compared God's Spirit to the Wind that bloweth where it liſteth; we hear the ſound of it, but know not whence it comes, or whither it goeth. *And the Name graven upon the White ſtone, none knows but he who hath it.* Eli *concluded* Hannah *to be drunk, when ſhe was pouring out her Soul before her Maker: and* Elias *believed, that the Church, in his days, was ſtinted to his own Perſon; and yet* God *told him, that there were* 7000. *in* Iſrael *who had not bowed their knees to* Baal: *why then ſhould any private Chriſtian determine Magiſterially, that wherein the greateſt of Prophets erred?*

The reed wherewith the Temple was to be meaſured Rev. 11. 2. *was only entruſted to an Angel; and yet he had not in Commiſſion* to meaſure the Court that was

with-

without, because it was given to the Gentiles. *And albeit, Rev. 7. the number of the Jews who were saved is determined; yet, the number of Gentiles is left indefinite, and said to be numberless.*

There is nothing more ordinary, than for each Nation to confine the Church within themselves. And in that Nation again, one corner will have themselves the Sanctum Sanctorum *of that only Temple; albeit our Saviour in his Gospel assures us, that men shall come from all corners of the World, and sit down with* Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. *And* John *in his* Revelation *tells us, that Multitudes of all Nations, Kindreds and Families, were seen following the Lamb. Upon this same block do those likewise stumble, who put the bolt of their uncharitableness upon the Gates of Heaven, to debar whole Professions, such as Lawyers and Physitians, from ent'ring in thereat; notwithstanding that the above cited place tells us, that there were only* 1200. *of the Tribe of* Levi *the Priest-chosen, and the like number was prick'd in the Tribe of* Judah, *the Lawgiver:* Aaron *the Priest*

did mold the golden Calf, and not Moſes *the Judge; and* Korah *and* Dathan *were Levites, and yet mutined againſt their Magiſtrates.*

I ſay not this to diſparage that holy Function: For none ſhall wiſh Aaron's *rod to flouriſh more than my ſelf; and ordinarily, thoſe who love not to touch the Lord's annointed, will likewiſe be ſure, to do his Prophets no harm; but, I ſay it to take off an aſperſion which hath ſtain'd too long, and too unjuſtly, thoſe of my own Profeſſion. Is not the Church our common Mother? albeit, I confeſs, ſhe is like-wiſe their Nurſe, in a more particular way; and ſince there is Heavenly* Mannah *enough to aliment us all, why ſhould Chriſtians deny to admit their Brethren to an equal partage?*

It grieves me ſore to ſee my Mother, the Church, tortur'd, like Rebecca, *by carrying ſtrugling Twins in her pained Bowels. And ſeeing all Chriſtians are but Pilgrims here, I admire that thoſe Pilgrims ſhould leave off to journey, and ſtand skirmiſhing and fighting with*

all

all such as will not travel their Road. And albeit we acknowledge, that the Spirit of God takes pains, and is sufficient for leading all men in the way wherein they should walk; yet, we must compell them, as if either He needeed our help, or we resolved to share with him the Glory of their Conversion. Thus God (who loves us all infinitely better than any one of us doth another) leaves us, upon our own hazard, a freedom in our choice, albeit we poor Miscreants compell one another, denying to our fellow-creatures that freedom which he allows all the Creation. I wish we would consider how each man eats, drinks, cares for his family, and performs all common dutys, rationally enough without any compulsion; and yet, in the affaires of Religion, wherein doubtless man is led by a far more infallible assistance, there are many slips committed, dayly and grosly, notwithstanding all pains taken, and force used by one man towards another. Thus it fares with us as with Patients, whom when the Phy-

tian ſtints to a narrow dyet, then they loath even that food, which their unreined Appetite would never have rejected. And this makes me apt to believe, that if Laws and Law-givers did not make Heretics vain, by taking too much notice of their extravagancys, the World ſhould be no no more troubled with theſe, than they are with the Chimera's of Alchymiſts *and* Philoſophers. *And it fares with them, as with Tops, which, how long they are ſcourged, keep foot and run pleaſantly, but fall how ſoon they are neglected and left to themſelves.*

In order to which it was wittily obſerved by our great King James *the Sixth, that the Puritans of his Age ſtrove with him, and yet ceded at firſt, in a difference between them and the Shoe-makers of* Edingburg: *For, not only pleaſes it their humor to contend where they gain honor and can loſe none, but likewiſe, by conteſting with Monarchs, they magnifie to the People their pious Courage: aſſuring the World, that ſuch attempts require a particular aſſiſtance from Hea-*

ven

ven; and when their jangling hath extorted ſome conceſſions from the Magiſtrate, (as ordinarily it doth) then they preſs that ſucceſs as an infallible mark of the Jure-divinoſhip *of their quarrel. Albeit, I confeſs, that when theſe, not only recede from the Canonized Creed of the Church, but likewiſe incroach upon the Laws of the State, then, as of all others, they are the moſt dangerous; ſo, of all others, they ſhould be moſt ſeverely puniſhed.*

Opinion, kept within its proper bounds, is a pure act of the mind: and ſo it would appear, that to puniſh the body for that which is a guilt of the Soul, is as unjuſt as to puniſh one relation for another. And this blood-thirſty zeal, which hath reigned in our Age, ſuppoſes our moſt merciful God to be of the ſame temper with thoſe Pagan Deities, who deſired to have their Altars gored with blood; and being Devils themſelves delighted in the deſtruction of men: whereas the Almighty, who delights not in the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live,

hath

hath left no Warrant upon holy Record, for perſecuting ſuch as diſſent from us; but even then when He commands that the Prophets, who tempt other to Idolatry, ſhould be ſlain; yet, ſpeaks He nothing of puniſhing of thoſe who are ſeduced by them. And why ſhould we ſhew ſo much Violence in thoſe things whereof we can ſhew no certain Evidence? as ordinarily we cannot in circumfundamental Debates. Are we not ready to condemn to day, as Phanatic, what yeſterday was judged Jure-divino? *And do not even thoſe who perſecuted others for their Opinions, admire why they ſhould be, upon that ſcore, Perſecuted themſelves? So that (Victory depending upon event) we legitimate the Perſecutions, to be uſed by others, againſt our ſelves, by the Perſecutions uſed by our ſelves, againſt others. Our Saviour forbids us to pluck up the tares, leaſt the Wheat be pulled up with it; and how can the moſt pious Perſecutors know, that the Saints are not deſtroyed with the Sinners?*

It is remarkable, that our Saviour diſarmed zealous Peter, *even when he was*

ſerving

serving Him in Person, in His greatest straits, and against the prostigat of His Enemies, the Jews: and that to prevent the irregular zeal, even of the first and best of Christians, the blessed Apostles, their divine Master thought it fit to arm them; not with Swords, but with Scrips, and to root out of their hearts all thoughts of violence, did oft inculcate to them, that His Kingdom was not of this World; convincing them by an excellent Argument, that He had no need of Armes, or Armyes; for else He could have commanded thousands of Angels. Did ever God command the Jewes to War against any neighboring Nation because they were Pagans (a quarrel which would have lasted till all the World had been conquered) Or, did our Saviour leave in Legacy to his Servants, that they should force others to turn Proselytes? which doubtlesse he had done, if he had resolved to allow such a rude mean of Conversion. All which makes me admire, why, in our late troubles, men really Pious, and naturally sober,

could

could have been ſo tranſported, as to deſtroy whom they could not convince, and to perſuade thoſe who were convinced, that Religion obliged them to deſtroy others.

My heart bleeds when I conſider how ſcaffolds were dyed with Chriſtian blood, and the fields covered with the Carcaſſes of murthered Chriſtians; and its probable, that there were more damned by unprepared deaths, in the fields, than were ſaved by peeping Sermons in incendiary Churches; and in this, I admire the Clemeney of our Royal Maſter, who, albeit His cauſe was more juſt than theirs, albeit He might have convinced them by obtruding to them their own Practiſes: yet, hath rather choſen to commande with His Scepter than His Sword. But, if the glory of God were the mark at whith theſe do levell, why beſtow they not their zeal, rather in Converting ſuch as ſcarce know or acknowledge that there is a God? And why are they more enraged againſt thoſe who agree with them in moſt things, than theſe who diſſent from them in all?

Take

Take not Christians more pains to refute one another, than to convince Gentiles? And ſtand not ſome Epiſcopiſts and Presbyterians at greater diſtance, than either do with Turks and Pagans? And to evidence, that rather Humor than Piety occaſions our difference, we may eaſily perceive, that the meaner the Subject is, the heat is always the greater.

If I had ever known ſo much as one whoſe faith had been the Trophy of a debate, I ſhould allow of debates in matters of Religion: But ſeeing men cannot be convinced by Miracles, it were ridiculous to preſs Converſion by Arguments. All the Divines in Europe *could not preſs the beſt founded of their Controverted and polemic truths, with ſo much Scripture, or ſo many Miracles as our bleſſed Saviour did His own divinity (which is the foundation of all Truths) And yet the Jews and almoſt all the world beſides, ſlighted this infallible Doctrine; And to evidence that there is a ſeaſon*

of Grace, independent from Arguments, did not many thouſands turn Proſelytes at Peters ſermon; whom all our Saviour's Homilies and Miracles could not perſuade? If one ſhould ſay, that the teſtimony of a few Fiſher-men ſhould not be believed in a matter of ſo great conſequence, as is the Salvation of the whole World; eſpecially when they did depone as Witneſſes, in a matter wherein both their honor and livelyhood was concerned, might not this ſtagger ſome mean Chriſtians? And yet I believe theſe Truths ſo much the more, becauſe ſuch as theſe were its firſt aſſerters; for, certainly it is one of the greateſt of Miracles, that ſo few and ſo illiterate perſons were able to convince the whole world. Thus we ſee, that one may account that a Miracle, which another looks upon as a folly; and yet none but God's Spirit can decide the Controverſie. Matters of Religion and Faith, reſembling ſome curious Pictures, and Optick Priſmes, which ſeem to change ſhapes and colors, according to the ſeveral ſtances from which the aſpicient views them.

The

The ballance of our judgments hath catched such a bruise by Adams fall, that scarce can we, by them, know the weight of any argument. But, which is worse, there is as great a defect in our partial weighing, as in the scales themselves: For, when we take either the pro *or* con *of any Controversie into our Patronage, we throw always in Arguments into that scale, wherein our own Opinion lyes; without ever taking leisure to conclude what may be alledged for the antipode Propositions: and then, when we receive an answer, our invention is busied, not in pondering how much conviction it hath in it, but by what slight it may be answered; and thus either passion, interest, or frequent meditation, are still the weights which cast the Ballance.*

This fiery Zeal hath likewise made another pimple flash out in the face of the Phanatick Church, and that is, a conceit that the Saints have the only right to all God's Creatures, the Wicked being only Usurpers and not Masters of them.

But I have heard this Opinion (ſo beaſtly is it) confuted by Balaam's *Aſſe, who could tell it's Maſter, Am not I thine own Aſſe? When* Aaron *and the people did Covenant without* Moſes, *then every man did bring his ear-rings to make up the Golden Calf. And we have lived in an Age, wherein we have ſeen our Countrey-men, like the* Chaldeans, *take the furniture both of the Temple and of the King's Houſe, and carry them away to their* Babylon *of confuſions; and in an Age wherein ſober men were forced to lend monies, to buy for their own Arms the heavy ſhackles of ſlavery,*

Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum.

Religion doubtleſs aims at two great deſigns; one is like the firſt Table, to perſuade us to adore God Almighty, Another is to perſuade us, like to the ſecond Table, to love our Neighbour, and to be a mean to ſettle all theſe jealouſies,

and

and compesce all these animosities which interest might occasion: and this appears by the Doxology jubilged by the Angels at our Saviour's birth, Glory to God, and peace and good-will towards men. *And therefore, as every private Christian should be tolerated by his fellow-subjects, to worship God inwardly according to his Conscience; So all should conspire in that exteriour uniformity of Worship, which the Laws of his Country injoyn. The first remark which God made of us after the Creation, was that* it was not fit for man to be alone; *there was only one Ark amongst the Jews by Gods own appointment. And seeing the Gospel terms the Church Christ's Spouse, it were absurd to think that He will divorce from her upon every error or escape; especially, seeing His blessed mouth hath told us, that under the Gospel it is not lawful to divorce upon all occasions; and if He will not for these deny her to be His Spouse, much lesse should we deny her to be our Mother. May not one, who is convinced in his judgment,*

that Monarchy is the beſt of Governments. live happily in Venice *or* Holland *? And that Travailer were abſurd, who would rather ſquable with theſe amongſt whom he ſojourns, then obſerve theſe Rites and Solemnities which are required by the Laws of the places where he lives? What is once ſtatued by a Law, we all conſent to, in chooſing Comiſſioners to repreſent us in theſe Parliaments where the Laws are made; and ſo if they ordain us to be decimated, or to leave the Nation if we conform not, we cannot ſay, when that Law is put to execution, that we are oppreſt; no more then we could complain, if one did remove us legally from theſe Lands which he purchaſed from our Truſtee, whom we had impowred to ſell it.*

As David *ſaid to* Saul, 1 Sam. 26. 20. *Why went the King out to catch a Flea? So may I ſay to our great Divines, Why contravert they about ſhadows? Is it fit that Chriſtians, who find it too great a task to govern their private Souls, ſhould be ſo much concerned*

cerned how the Church is governed by others? Wherefore, seeing many have been saved who were most inexpert in these questions, and that foolish zeal, passion, and too much curiositie therein, hath damned many, I may conclude, that to pry into these, is neither necessary, because of the first, nor expedient, because of the last.

Since discretion opened my eyes, I have always judg'd it necessary for a Christian, to look oftner to his Practice of Piety, *than to* Confession of Faith; *and to fear more the crookedness of his* will, *than the blindness of his* judgment *delighting more to walk on from grace to grace, working out the work of his own salvation with fear and trembling, than* to stand still *with the* Galileans *curiously gazing up to heaven. True Religion and undefiled is to visit the Widow and the Fatherlesse; and the dittay drawn up against the damned spirits shall be, That when our Saviours poor ones were hungry, they did not feed them; when they were naked, they did not cloath them; without mentioning any thing of their un-*

belief in matters of Controverſie, or Government. And therefore I hope, that theſe to whom I addreſs my ſelf in this Diſcourſe, will rather believe me to be their friend, becauſe of their Piety, than their enemy, becauſe of their Errors.

THE

THE VIRTUOSO, OR STOICK.

CHAP. I.

Of Atheisme.

ALbeit Man be but a Statue of dust kneaded with tears, moved by the hid Engines of his restless Passions, a clod of Earth, which the shortest Fever can burn to Ashes, and the least shower of Rhumes wash away to nothing

thing; Yet makes he as much noise in the world, as if both the Globes (those glorious Twins) had been unwombed from that formless Chaos, by the Midwifry of his wit; he speakes thunder, looks lightnings, breathes storms, and, by the Eloquence of his own Vanity, persuades himself that his commands are able to unhinge the Poles. From which boundless pride, I confidently conclude, that if a natural instinct, or as the Stoicks term it, προς τον θεον, had not irresistibly bowed his Faith to assent to a Deity, he had never, neither upon design nor in complyance to custom (as Atheists alledge) suffer'd to creep into his Creed, that there was one greater than himself, who could rein his Affections, and bound their affects, according to the dictates of his irresistible will.

And albeit Regiments of Arguments, levyed both from the stately fabrick of Heavens arched Pend, and from the immitable Embroidery of Earths

flowry Boul, be requiſite for conquering the infidelity of others, and for rendering them Tributaries to that all-forming Eſſence: Yet doth my faith render up the arms of its depraved reaſon, and turn Proſelyte to this divine truth, upon the ſole ſight of one of theſe dying Atheiſts; who, upon any ſurpriſal, do, with amazement, throw up their eyes to Heaven, as if they ſent their looks in Ambaſſage to beg aſſiſtance from thence; and cry *God ſave me*, as if theſe beaſtly ſouls, when attacqued unexpectedly, knew whence their health were to be expected: Like to other ſick Brutes, who when aſſaulted by ſickneſs, are, by the hand of that ſame ſtorge and inſtinct led to ſome herb or flower, which is an Apothecary's ſhop appointed by nature for them.

Neither think I theſe Arguments which are twiſted together of three Propoſitions ſo ſtrong as theſe Inſtincts are; where truth, like the Sun, ſeems to dart home its light in one unperceivable

ceivable Act, whereas in these, purblind nature may be mistaken, not only judging of the Truth of either of the three parts, but likewise of their connexion and alliance. I know that that miscreant, who began his Hell upon Earth, by being burnt at *Tholouse* for Theorick Atheisme, did, upon his first approach to the Fire, cry, *O God*: Whereupon, being taxt by the assisting Jesuit, answered, that these and such like expressions were the offspring of custom. But poor Soul he might have considered, that seeing he had crept from his cradle into that error, and had run his glass to its last sand, in propagating that hellish conceit; That therefore this expression was rather a confession than an escape; rather a product of a rational soul, than of depraved custom; for as it was in it self a divine truth, so it was in him contrary to a setled habit.

There is another Caball of Athiests, who think that this belief was at first

but

but the quaint *Leger-de-main* of ſome ſtrongly-pated Statef-man; who to over-awe the capricioufneſs of a giddy multitude, did forge this opinion of a rewarder of all humane actions: And to enforce this, do inſtance *Numa Pompilius*, and *Mahomet*, whoſe palpable Cheats grew up in their ſucceſſors into Religions; and whoſe inventious were received with as much bigotry, by the wiſeſt of men, as is that deity which is now the object of our adorations. Wherefore (ſay they) ſeeing the Rational Soul hath failed ſo oft, and ſo abſurdly in its diſcoveries, how, or why ſhould we ſubmit our ſelves ſlavihly to its determinations? For that which doth at ſome times err, can never at any time be concluded infallible.

To theſe I anſwer, that albeit, as to the particular way of Worſhip, the world is oft-times deluded: And albeit, even as to their apprehenſions of this incomprehenſible Eſſence, multitudes be ſometimes miſled; Yet, theſe

these staggering Fancies fix this great Truth, *that there is a Supream, who must be adored*: For if this innate Instinct did not coopere with these Impostures, in gaining an assent to their fictitious Religious and Hierarchies, it were impossible for any humane Authority to establish Principles so remote from reason, and to subjugate by these, even the mildest tempers. But I take the root from which these Errors do spring, to be, that the twilight of darkened reason glimsing to man that *impressa* of the divine Image, which though much decayed, yet rests still upon his soul; and not being able, because of the faintness of his light, and the decay of that divine *impressa*, to discern exactly what that Deity is, with whose image it is signeted, believes implicitely, with a profound respect, any who hath the confidence to obtrude any knowledge of it upon them: Concluding in the conclave of their own thoughts, that none durst contema so far

far that omnipotent Thunder-darter, as to vend their own fancies for sacred Oracles. And albeit these hoodwinked Nations did erect a [illegible] in their own hearts wherein all these Vice-gods were worshiped; Yet were all these but representations of the true God; for His Omnipotency and Power was adored in their *Mars*; His omniscience in their *Apollo*, *&c.* And it is very probable that the Heathens admired so each attribute of God Almighty, that they thought each deserved distinct Altars; so that their errors had their rise from rather too much than too little respect; and that as the same Ocean receives several names from the several shoars it washes; so, according to the several operations of the most High, did these deluded Pagans establish several Deities. But that all these did ultimately terminate in one, is clear from the Inscription of that Athenian Altar *To the unknown God*; from the designation of ἀγνῶστοι, from

their

their common feasts or δαῖτες; from the adjunct of *Delphicus* given to *Apollo* which in Greek signifies *unus*; as *Macrobius* observes: from their Altars erected, *Diisque Deabusque omnibus*, and from the general invocation of all the Deities joyntly subjoyned to all their particular sacrifices. So that the great and all-comprehending *Idea*, wherein he is represented, as in one big mirror to us, was by them broke in pieces, and in each of these pieces taken alone did they see a Deity, though much abridged; Whereas all these pieces, when set together, did represent but one, and each piece did then shew but a part. But to evidence that our belief of a Deity is not a state and traditional Imposture, I would willingly know, if ever the skilfullest of Sathans emissaries was able to induce the world to believe that there was no God; which (doubtless) might have at some occasions contributed much to some mens Politick designs, and which

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that rebell would have attempted, if either God had not bestrained him, or himself had not known it impresticable. And it is most remarkable, that the first promotors of that divine Doctrine were persons, who, both by precept and practice, decryed Ambition and declined State-imployments; and so it were absurd to think that they invented these, in subordination to State Projects.

There is also much force in that Argument, wherein, from the Nature of Prophesying, is concluded the *Being* of a God: for, to foresee, is doubtless a way of seeing, far above the reach of humane Nature; man not being able to conclude but that, What is possible upon both parts, may come to pass upon either of its parts. And hence it was, that the Heathens themselves termed this prediction *divination*; as if it could not be but divine. As also, if there were not a God, but that this were a fiction, it would follow, that error

and

and delusion (such as this *ex hypothesi*) were able, and actually did, of all other things, frame a man's soul most to virtue: and that the best of men (such as the adorers of a Deity) were both the greatest cheats and blockheads. All which, are absurdities to be hiss'd at by all who are masters of the meanest portion of human reason.

There lurketh much curious Contemplation in pondering, how that albeit the parents of all Heathenish Religions, have been incomparably the cheifest Wits in their times; for else they could not have impress'd the Spirits of their Disciples with such abstract Principles: Yet all their Models seem repugnant to common reason: and they have choisd to teach Principles which seem ridiculous.

Thus the Fictions related by the Poets of their Gods, the Rites used by the *Romans*, and the Fopperies of the *Alcoran*, are absurdities unworthy of a rational belief; if man were not acted by an innate Principle, to place

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the Myſteries of Religion above his Reaſon.

By which we ſee, that the imputation caſt upon the Scriptures of their contrariety to Reaſon, chocks likewiſe the Principles of all Nations: and certainly, if there were nothing revealed to us in Religion, but what the ſhort line of our reaſon might fadom, the Omnipotency of God, and the weakneſs of our own reaſon, ſhould remain ſtill unknown; and ſeeing our reaſon is only ſuitable to our nature; certainly if that infinite Eſſence and it's Myſteries might be comprehended by that ſame reaſon, which meaſureth things finite, we might conclude God to be finite likewiſe; and is it not impudence in us who know not the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, nor the reaſon why the *Adamant* draweth the Iron, to repine becauſe we cannot comprehend the Eſſence of God Almighty? and then vainly to conclude, that becauſe we cannot graſp within the

ſhort armes of our underſtanding, the vaſt bulk of the Deity, that there is no Deity? A concluſion as abſurd, as if one ſhould ſay, that when the nimble wings of an arrow tranſport it above our ſight, it did leave off to be, when it left off to be perceived. And I am of opinion, that myſteriouſneſs ſuits rarely well with divine Truths, the fineſt things uſing always to be beſt wrapt up: thus if we liſten to our hid inclinations, we will find a pleaſing veneration in reſerved ſilence; and our curioſity will ſwiftly follow, what by it's retiredneſs fleeth from us: ſilent groves whoſe buſh top Trees lay their heads together, as in a Conſpiracy, to reſiſt the Sun's entry, and powder its light with Sables, creats a veneration in us. And as the Heathens did chooſe Groves, So did the primitive Chriſtians light their Devotions with Torches and Candles, intimating thereby that umbrag'd ſilence was an excellent Shrine for ſincere devotions; and in this ſenſe, it may be, the Word of God

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is said to be a Lantern to our steps; and the seven Churches are compared to seven Candlesticks. Did not our Saviour teach His Disciples in Parables? and was not the Ark vailed from the eyes of the People? the Pagans dispensed their divinity in Hieroglyphicks; and amongst humane Writers, the most Mysterious carry still the Lawrels: And why should we vainly wish to comprehend the nature of the Deity, seeing *Moses*, Gods intimate, and minion, could not have that allowance? And God himself, when for our necessary instruction He would discover something of Himself to us, is forced *per ἀνθρωποπάθειαν*, (as Divines speak) to discover Himself in a stile borrowed from humane frailty, and to express His infinite affections by our disordered Passions.

I believe, that *Socrates*, nature's greatest Disciple, and the Deity's *protomartyr*, was a Proselyte of the same Faith, which we profess, and had

his large Soul illuminated by that Sun of righteousness, whose refulgent rayes are now the bright Torches of the Christian Church. Neither is my belief in this staggered by the silence of his co-temporary Writers, as to this particular: seeing these, not being of the same persuasion with him, but being convinced of his Moral worth, did describe his opinions suitably to their own apprehension. Thus did those Pagan Historians admire the great Saviour of mankind, only for His Moral accomplishments, without reaching these divine Principles, by which He was acted. The *Stoicks* likewise were, in all probality, a tribe of *John* Baptist's, and God having resolved to purge the Universe of its Original unrighteousness by that blessed *Manna* which came down from Heaven to give life to the world, did, by their Doctrine of abstemiousness, as by a spare dyet, prepare its body for receiving that divine Dose. And certainly, if men

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had disbanded that execrable Troup of Lusts, against which these preached, and had listened (as the *Stoicks* Book of Discipline injoyned) to their own private Consciences, and had, by retiredness abstracted themselves from the reach of temptations, it had facilitated much their conversion: for if the young Lawyer, who came to consult Christ how to draw up his Securitie of Heaven, and of his portion there, had believed their Oracle, which decryd Riches as the unnecessary baggage of mans life, and the mudd which clog'd the wings of the Souls Contemplation, and kept it from soaring its Natural pitch, he had never refused our Saviour's yoke, because he was commanded to sell all and to give it to the poor. Thus likewise if the Rich Glutton had dyeted himself according to the scant prescript of their allowance, his ichorched Tongue had not stood in need of a drop of Water to allay its Thirst. Neither had *Nicodemus*

needed to have mantled himself in the darkness of the Night, when he came to our Saviour, out of fear lest he should have been discovered; seeing their Doctrine might have taught him, that *fear* was a Passion unworthy to be lodged in the Soul of man: And that there is nothing here, which a man either should, or needeth to fear.

But albeit neither *instinct* nor *Faith*, were able to convince us infallibly of this Truth; Yet is it both more satisfying, and more safe to embrace this Opinion, than its contrary. More satisfying, because mans *summum bonum* here, being lodged in the Tranquillity of his Spirit; That which can best plane and smooth the rugged and uneven face of his frequent and inevitable Misfortunes, must be doubtless the most careſſable of opinions: wherefore, seeing nothing can strengthen so much mans frailty, nothing check so soon his dispair, nothing feed so much his hope,

hope, nor animate so much his courage, as to believe that there is a God, who beareth the heavieſt end of all our croſſes upon the ſhoulders of His *love*; who is able to turn, or arreſt the giddy wheel of fortune by the ſtrong hand of His Omnipotency; and who twiſteth Lawrels of inimaginable joyes for the heads of thoſe who fight under his banners. If a man leaned not his weary Soul upon this divine Reſt, he were not only an Enemy to Nature, but even to his own happineſs. What rocks of danger could men eſcape, if blind fortune did ſit at the helme; and if vertuous Perſons complain, as Affairs are preſently ſtated, that their Merites are not weighed with indifferency enough in the Scales of Juſtice? What might be expected, if hazzard got the ballance to manage? and thoſe who leave their Native Countries, when they perceive that the Law beginneth to render its Oracles in an unconſtant Stile, and with a

trembling voice, behooved to leave the World, if this Anarchy were by Atheisme established? For as a wise *Stoick* well observed, ουκ εστι ζην εν τω κοσμω κενω θεον, ϗ κενω προνοιας. *It were impossible to live in a world void of God, and void of Providence.*

It is likewise most safe; for if there be a Deity, doubtless these obdured Atheists, whose obstinacy hath conjured their consciences to a constrain'd silence and bribed these infallible Witnesses, to depone what suited best with their wild resolutions, or rather neglected resolutely their sincere depositions: then certainly, the just flames of that God's indignation, whom they have disclaimed, will heat for them a Furnace in Hell, beyond what the other damned Spirits shall meet with in their Torture: Whereas albeit there be no Tribunal, from which such a Thunder-bolt sentence may be darted, nor no supreme Judge by whom our Actions shall be canvas'd; Then those who have paid

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their adorations at his Altars, ſhall be in no danger. Wherefore, ſeeing it ſhould be the task of a *Virtuoſo*, to turn out all ſuch thoughts as may raiſe a mutiny in his breaſt; it were a fooliſh toy in him to entertain Atheiſme, which is a Nurcery of diſquietneſs: for whoſe breaſt could enjoy a calme whilſt a concernment of ſo much weight as his eternal Portion, did hinge from the weak thred of a mere *may be*, and of ſuch a *may be* as marches ſo near with a *will not be*?

But if ye would know, what diſquieting vapors Atheiſme ſends up to the brain, when it is once drunk in: go to the horror-creating beds of a dying Atheiſt, whoſe roaring voice might awake the moſt lethargic Conſcience that ever the Devil lull'd aſleep: There ye ſhall know by the Urinal of his eyes, and the water ſtanding therein, what Convulſion-fits his Soul ſuffers; and ſhall learn, from his own mouth, how grievouſly

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his diſeaſed Soul is ſtretched upon the rack of diſpair: then it is that the voluminous Regiſters of his Conſcience, which did lie formerly claſp'd in ſome unſearcht corner of his memory, are laid open before him, and the Devil, who hitherto gave him the leſſening end of the Proſpect, to ſurvey his ſins in, turns now its magnifying end to this fearful eye. It ſhould be then the grand deſign of a Philoſopher, to order his own breaſt aright, before he go abroad to view the Works of the Creation; leſt if he leave its door unbolted, the Devil ſteal from him his richeſt Jewel, whileſt he ſweats to enrich his Contemplation with what is of far leſs conſequence.

CHAP. II.

Of Superstition.

IT is not wild fancy to think, that *Atheisme* hath been the product of *Superstition*: for certainly, many who were by humor *Gallio's*, finding that Religion exacted from men such inhumane homage to its recognizance, as was the sacrificing Children among the Heathens, wearying Pilgrimages and hectic Lents amongst Christians, did resolve rather to deny than to adore such Deities. Thus *Lucretius* revolted upon *Agamemnon's* sacrificing his daughter *Iphigenia* for the Grecian safety, crying out, *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.*

And thus *Petronius Arbiter*, a Monk of the same Cell, says that,

Primus

Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.
——————— *Fulmina cœlo*
Cum caderent ———————

And to prevent this, our Saviour doth oft inculcate, that his yoak is easie and His burden is light. And doubtless, as the straightest line is alwayes the shortest; So the most rational designs are always easilyest effectuated; and as *Seneca* hath excellently observed, *Licet Deus non esset, tamen non peccarem ob peccati vilitatem.* There is something of meanness in the gallantest, and most alluring sin. And this is most energetically exprest in Scripture, whilst it is said *that the wicked weary themselves by their sins.* A Principle, which not only the Magisterial Authority of Gods Spirit, but our experience likewise places above the reach of all scruples: for are not the Inquietudes, the Cheats, and palliated Parricides, and Sacriledges brooded by Ambition, the Churlishness and Close-handedness

dedneſs parented by Avarice, effects unworthy to be father'd upon any Rational Soul; and at which we ſhould fearlet our cheeks with bluſhes, as well as empale them through fear, and ſhould ſtand as much in awe of our Conſciences, as moſt do of a Deity? Yet, it may be we are in a miſtake, whilſt we place Superſtition in the exceſs of ſuch Adorations, as are either commanded or indifferent: for ſeeing the object of our adoration, God Almighty, is, in Himſelf, infinite, we can never exceed either in our reſpects to Him, or in our Reſpects to Him, or in the expreſſions of them. Exceſs being only admiſſible, were the object is finite, and where we attribute more than is due, which can never be, here. Thus if Kneeling be lawfull at any occaſion, I hardly ſee why it is not lawful to kneel at all occaſions. And if theſe exterior Rites and Ceremonies (ſome whereof are allow'd in all Churches) be judged requiſite, for expreſſing

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our Vassalage and Subordination to God our Maker, either they are altogether unwarrantable or else we should proportion them (as far as in us lyes) to that infinite object. And seeing the Angels are said to cover their faces with their wings before Him, the Patriarches to fall upon their face and worship; and our adorable Saviour in that conflict wherein He represented sinfull man, is, by *Matthew*, remarked to have fallen upon His face; by *Mark* to have fallen upon the ground, and by *Luke* to have kneeled: What is crawling man, that he should account such gestures fond Superstition! It would appear then, that Superstition consists in mans worshipping God by means unlawfull, such as are Children-sacrifices, and such like, whereby His divine Attributes are mis-represented, and tainted with cruelty, or Tyranny; and not in an excess, in such expressions of our respect as are in themselves lawfull. And if there be any strength in that

Argument

Argument, wherein we inforce the Being of God, from the harmonious consent and assent of all Nations: certainly, by that same Argument, we may establish the decency, if not the necessity, of Ceremonies. For, what Nation bowes to Altars, without profound and external submissions? And, who lodges upon tht surface of our Globe, who payes not as the *reddendo* of their Charter to those gods whom they worship, ceremonial Adorations, wrapt up in most submissive Rites?

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the World's Creation.

THat God made all things for His glory, is an expreſſion, which (I think) looks not well at the Teſt of reaſon, and ſeems to have no warrant but unwary cuſtome: for beyond all queſtion, His glory was ſo brim-ful formerly, that it neither needed, nor could receive any conſiderable acceſſion from this ſmall drop. And beſides this, the innate apprehenſion we have of doing any thing for one's glory, dyes this expreſſion with ſome guilt: Yet, I confeſs, we may warrantably ſay, that when perverſe man calls His Power in queſtion, or controverts His Being *only wiſe*; that then, God, for our inſtruction, and the vindication of His own glorious Attributes, doth many things for His own glory. And in this ſenſe, the

the Scripture saith, that God will punish the wicked, and deliver His people, for His own glory. And wherever it is said, that God doth, or createth any thing, for His own glory, it is doubtless in this sense; in which man (who is made after His image) may act for his own glory without any vanity; albeit to act for his own glory, in the first sense, were in him criminal. It is then more probable, that God being infinitely good, and all good being *sui communicativum*, that His design in Creating the World, was to communicate and display His goodness: and upon this *Base* probably hath *Aristotle* reared up his Error, of *the worlds existency from all Eternity*: for, seeing God was *ab æterno* infinitely good, and that *good* is still communicative: he did (it may be) conclude, that *ab æterno*, God did communicate His goodness: which could only be to Creatures. And therefore it was necessary that there should have been a World: and

some Philosophers have aver'd, that the World flowed from God *per emanationem, ab æterno*, as beams are lanced out from the body of the Sun. Albeit I be none of *Aristotle*'s Partisans, nor hold my Philosophy of him, as my Superior; Yet I cannot but think, that God hath communicated His goodness to worlds prior to ours, which seems but a conceit of 5600 years standing. But I am not so Arrogant as to determine the time of the first Worlds birth, nor how many Cadets it hath had; resolving to leave its Date, blank, to be fill'd up by some Arrogent Pretender. Neither should I accuse mine own thoughts of Heresie, for concluding, that probably there are at present thousands of Worlds co-existing with ours; whereof some, it may be, are governed by Maximes, if not contrary, yet at least different from these which are our Canons. All which Worlds, albeit they were actually fulfilling, would fit in the bo-

som of the large imaginarie Spaces, but like so many small balls in the corner of a large Tennis-court. I shall not, for confirming this opinion, cite, with an ignorant French Curate, the parable of the Lepers, where it is said, *Nonne sunt decem mundi?* because I know that it was wittily answered, *Sed ubi sunt reliqui novem?*

CHAP. IV.

Of Eternity.

THat Eternity is all present, and that, in it, there is neither preterit, nor future, is but a Conceit, and a needless Mysterie imposed upon our belief, which is really more Mysterious than the Trinity; who knows but it is founded upon an expression in *Cicero*, wherein Eternity is call'd *æternum instans*? For how then can it be said, that God was before the World? for *was* is preterit, and before the World there was, as themselves alledg, no time; and so there was a *was* in Eternity. Is not God call'd by Himself *Alpha* and *Omega*, first and last, the one whereof is preterit, and the other future? And it is said, *Rev.* 16. 5. *O glorious God, who art, and wast, and shalt be.* And if it be answered, That this is only

only fitted to our Capacities; certainly, that is all is cravel: for doubtless there is no such reall thing, as these three measures of time, even in things finite and created; for they owe their Being only to our conceit, as well in the one as in the other. And when God describ'd Himself by His name J A H, *I am*, it was not mean't, that no measure of time could be attributed to Him, but the present; but rather, that what He was, was to man incomprehensible. And that all we could know of Him, was, that He existed; and by that expression, that all things to Him are present, was meant, that by His Knowledge *intuitive*, (as Divines term it) He comprehends all things which were to be, as if they were really present; and this is spoke, not of his Being, but of his knowledge. Neither can it be concluded that if *was* or *shall be*, may be attributed to God, then He must be mutable, and that, *was* denotes mutation; for as I

said formerly, these are but Terms, not really existing, and so cannot import any real mutation.

CHAP. V.

Of Providence.

HOw God imploys His uncontrolable Scepter, after what fashion He governs this lower World, and in what Characters He writes His Eternal Decrees hath been the Arrogant study of some mad-cap Pedants, who talk as Magisterially of His Decrees, as if they were of His Cabinet Councel. And albeit to deter such bold intruders, He destroyed thousands of His ancient People, because they look'd into His Ark; Yet, such is the petulancy of some later Wits, that they must needs look into His unsearchable bosom, and there marshal all His Decrees, and conceit they understand His way of working;

working; and thus in disputing of objects, infinitely removed, by their abstruseness, from their sense, they shew themselves more ridiculous, than those who would dispute concerning the qualities of an object, before it come so near as that they may know of what *Species* it is: for seeing it is a Maxime, that there is nothing in our understanding, which hath not past to it throw our senses, and that the things of God are immaterial, and so fall not under the cognizance of our Senses; It must be folly to think, that any humane scrutinity can find out Mysteries that are so unsearchable, except they be imparted to them by immediate Revelation; a kind of correspondence which I conceive few now a days hold with Heaven. Yet, I confess, it is as hard to confute the Fictions, as it is impossible for them to come by the knowledge of them. But as this study is unattainable, so it is unprofitable; for seeing God's art of

governing the World, and His Decrees of saving or damning its Citizens, is a trade we shall never be able to Practise: why should we have such an itch to understand it? It should be enough to us, to be saved, albeit we know not how, or by what manner of Decrees; except we be of the same metall with that foolish patient, who would not be cured, because the Physitian would not shew him how the cure was to be composed, and what were its ingredients. And is it not the *Zenith* and top-branch of madness for us to pry into God's unsearchable Decres, who know not how our neighbours calf is formed in its Dams belly?

It was a narrow Omnipotency, which some Mean-spirited Heathens allowed their *Jupiter*, when they conceited that he wanted leasure to dispose of triffles.

Non licet exiguis rebus adesse Jovi.

For if the twinkling of an eye, were not time sufficient for God to dispose

of all the affairs of this world, then there might be a greater power than His; and the Power to dispose to suddainly, were wanting to his Omnipotency, and so He were not infinite, and consequently no God.

Neither was the Rodomontade of *Alphonsus*, King of *Portugal*, more Pious than this. Wen he alleaged that if God had made use of His advice in framing the World, He had helped many things in it, which he now could justly tax of Error.

These two extremes, are the two Poles, whereon the Globe of Atheism turns it self; some out of an impious humility, Complementing God out of His Authority, by denying that He disposes of the meaner size of business; and others detracting from his Providence, in attributing his Operations to *Chance* and *Fate*, or branding them with injustice or imprudence.

There are, among School-men, two Opinions which dispute Victory with (almost)

(almost) equal forces. The one whereof, will have God the sole Agent, and to make use of secundary causes, only, as of ciphers: these say that it is not fire which burns, but that God burns *ad præsentiam ignis*; nor Water which cools, but that God cools *ad presentiam aquæ*: which is, in my Opinion, the same thing as to say, that God jugled with man; and as Charmers do, presented ingredients, but wrought by hid means.

In too near an Affinity with this, is the Doctrine of Predestination, as some teach it; wherein they will have man to play the mere Spectator, in his own Salvation: and albeit there be a free and full tender of Mercy made to lost man, yet will not allow him any Power to embrace or reject it; judging this one of the necessary Appanages of Gods Omnipotency, that he doth save or condemn *ex mero beneplacito*; never considering, that the question is not, what God

(some)

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can do, but what he doth: And that it derogates nothing from his Omnipotency, that he will not damn poor sinners; who according to their Doctrine cannot be blamed for their obstinacy; because it was never fixed to them to do otherwise: and how (I pray you) could the sluggard, in the parable, have been Punished, for not improving his Talent, and laying it up in a Napkin, if God had, by His Decree, cast an insolvable knot upon that Napkin, wherein it was laid up?

The other opinion, will have secundary causes the sole Agents; and teaches, that God, in the first moulding of each Creature, did dote it with innate qualities, sufficient to act every thing requisite for its subsistence; but in sign of its subjection to its Maker, reserved to Himself, as His Prerogative Royal, a Power to bend and bow these inclinations upon extraordinary occasions, for the good of the Universe, or when his infalli-

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ble Omniprudence ſhould think expedient. Thus, when that All-ſeing eye of the World, the Sun, was firſt turned off the frame, it had in Commiſſion to ſow its influences over the World without any retardment; Yet was its motion Arreſted, and turned back by an extraordinary Warrant in the days of *Joſhua* and *Zedekiah*. Thus they make the Creatures reſemble a Watch, which after it is once compleated, goes by its own Springs and Wheels, without the Artiſts extraordinary aſſiſtance. Yet when either its motion becomes irregular, or when the owner finds it fit, it is unpieced, or hath its Index put forward or backward at his pleaſure. And this laſt, ſeems to ſuit beſt with the Principles, both of Chriſtianity and Stoicism. With Chriſtianity, becauſe it gives a check to preſumption, and ſuffers not man to think himſelf the ſole Arbiter of his own condition; becauſe God can eaſily quaſh theſe *Babylon*-like fancies, which his topleſs ambi-

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tion is ſtill a building; and to his deſpair; becauſe a lift from the ſtrong arm of Providence, may heave him up above all his difficulties.

This correſponds beſt likewiſe with Stoiciſme, becauſe it pulls the hands of a ſluggard from his boſome, and ſets them a work to prepare for himſelf, and not to repoſe his unreaſonable hopes upon divine Providence; which only keeps thoſe from ſinking, who endeaver to ſwim. This likewiſe takes from man, all excuſe of ſinning, nor ſuffering him to lay over his vitiouſnes upon Providence, a ſhift too ordinary omongſt ſuch as miſunderſtand the raſhleſs Doctrine of the reformed Churches.

This opinion makes us likewiſe underſtand, what the Heathens meant by *Fortune*, which they termed *giddy*; what the Stoicks meant by *Fate*, which they confeſſed to be *irreſiſtible*; and in what ſence Philoſophers concluded that each man could hammer out his own Fortune. As to the Pagans *For-*

tune

June, it cannot be thought, that seing it was by themselves confess'd to be *blind*, that they could trust it with the reins of the admirably managed World. And seeing they confessed, that it was always staggering and unconstant, it cannot be thought that they could ascribe to it, all the curious and just events, which they themselves admired hourly. Wherefore it is probable, that the Philosophers, having through the prospect of Nature, and by an uninterrupted experience, observed, that man (who acted from a freedom of spirit unrestrained, either by Providence or starr-influences, as to his ordinary Operations) was of a volative and capricious humor: therefore they concluded that the state of human affairs, which was framed and unframed at his will or pleasure, behoved necessarily to be most subject to changes. And that seeing the Victories of *Cæsar*, depended upon the inclinations of his Souldiers, who by abandoning him, would

fetch

fetch his Prosperity away with them, they had reason therefore to term fortune Frail and exposed to hazard.

Thus the advancement of the restless Courtier is uncertain, because it hinges from the humour of his Prince whose spirit hath some allay of inconstancy, as well as hath that of the fearful Subject, who trembles under his Scepter. And thus the oyl-consuming student can promise himself no applause, because the Paralytic hand of the multitudes fancies, holds the Scales wherein his Abilities are weighed.

In fine, *Fortune* was nothing to those Ancients, but the unbodyed freedom of mans will, considered abstractly from all particular persons and the innate qualities of all other Creatures (which, because they are mortal, must therefore be changable) than which nothing is more inconstant, nothing more blind.

The other branch of divine Providence,

dence, which consists in the supreme Authority, whereby God makes all humane inclinations run sometimes against the byas of their specific Nature, was by them termed *Fate.* And this, in their Mythology, they fabled to be an *Adamant* chain, which they fastned to the foot of *Jupiter's* Chair; meaning by its Adamantine nature, that it was hard to be broke, like the *Adamant*; and by fastning it to *Jupiters* Chair, that it was the product of the Almighty's Power. Thus *Fortune* and *Fate,* were to them but the right and left hand of Christian Providence.

These embodyed *Angels,* the *Stoicks,* finding that *Fortune's* megrim could not be cured, nor *Fate's* decrees rescinded, and yet resolving, in spight of all external accidents, to secure to themselves a calmness of spirit; did place their happiness in the contempt of all these follies, whose blossoms *Fortune* could not blast, and sought for happiness in an acquiescence

science to all which Providence did unalterably decree; so that neither Fortune nor Fate could stand in the way of their happiness, because they slighted the one, and submitted to the other.

And in this sense, each man in their Schools, was admitted to be Master of work to his own fortune; and that without disparaging the Omnipotent Power of the great Fortune-maker, in submission to whom their happiness was placed.

Albeit the knowledge and acknowledgment of a God, be the *basis* of true Stoicisme, and a firmer one than any the Heathens could pretend to: Yet that knowledge of Him, which by the curiosity of School-men and the bigotry of Sub-preachers, as now formed in a Body of Divinity, is of all others the least necessary and the most dangerous. And whereas we did see God but in a Glass formerly, that Glass is now so misted and foyl'd by each Pedants flegma-

the breath, that it is hard to see him at all, but impossible to see Him there: And to extend a little that Mysterious Analogy, we are said to behold God here, as in a Glass; and as objects are best perceived in the smoothest Mirrors; so the plainest descriptions of him are still the truest: for when He is seen by Atheists in the Globe-glass of their infidelity, He appears less than really He is; when beheld by the Pagans in the Multiplying Glass of Paganisme, He appears many; and when He look'd is upon in the Magnifying Glass of Superstition, though He appear but one, Yet He is misrepresented, because He is represented as more terrible than he desires to appear; and ordinarily the better cut Glasses are, in the more Artificial, the worse the face, as by them represented.

CHAP. VI.

Of Theory.

THat first course which did sow all the World with Briers and Thorns, did, of all other things, fall most heavily upon the Soul of man. Which because it was chief in the Transgression, ought in reason to have been most tortured in the Punishment. And now his disquieted Spirit, is daily pierc'd with the Prickles of Thorny disputes and debates; which, as like briers, they produce no fruit fit for alimenting that noble half of man, which is his Rational Soul; So do they, like Thorns, pierce tender his Conscience, and to screw his Torments to their highest pin; the thoughts of God, and of settlement in Him, which like balme should cure those sores, is become that Hemlock,

which occasions his distractions, and poysons his Meditations. For, albeit the Heroes of the Primitive Church, did give milk in abundance to Infant-Christians; Yet, many of their successors, have mixt it so with the tart Vinegar of contention, that the milk begins now to crudle, and so is become loathsome to the appetite of tender believers. For, most of Churchmen, being idle, and conceiving, that if they taught only the Holy Scriptures, their vocation might by Laics be undervalued as eane, and that they would be denyed that applause, which was due to quaintness of wit, especially in a setled Church, wherein Church-men could not draw reverence from the people, by Oracles, as did the Heathen Priests, nor by prophecies and miracles, as did the Servants of the most High, under the old and new Testaments; did therefore, according to their private inclinations, frame each to himself a new kind of Divinity. The

more Pragmatick sort, and those whose humor was edged with choler, invented polemic or controverted divinity: And so by an intestine and civil war of opinions, raised within the bowels of Religion, did waste and pillage that holy Canon, which formerly flowed with the milk of sincere Doctrine, and the honey of divine Consolations. And then that precious blood, which formerly purpled only Pagan-scaffolds, dyed now the swords of fellow-believers; who, to propagate their private judgment, buried Churches under their rubbish, fed the birds of Heaven with the carcases of pious and reverend Churchmen: and by the mad hands of bigot opiniastry, broke to pieces all the sacred bonds of natural and civil duties; and thus they raised the devil of contention, whom they could not lay again, and made this itch of disputing turn the Scab of the Church.

Others again, in whose brains fullen melancholy formed phantomes

and ideas, invented Scholastic Theology; and these in abstract cells, erected a Mint-house, for coyning the dross of their own contemplations, into wonderful bombast notions; and to make them go current, in the suffering Church, gave them the *impressa* of Theology.

A third sort, not able to soare their pitch in the sky of invention, resolved to set up a correspondence with Heaven: and this they called Enthusiastic, or inspired Theology. And their Cabbins were Post-houses, where one might know what was resolved lately in the conclave of heaven, whether the King or Parliament was to wear the Lawrels, and what should be the issue of our pious rebellions. These could likewise cast the horoscope of our salvation; and invented a species of Physiognomy, whereby they could tell if the marks of Grace dwelt upon a face; and if one had the tracts of an elect of God. After this fashion did they prophesie

their own fancies, and call that *Providence* only which made for them.

There wants not some likewise, who, out of a well meaning desire, to make the lamp of truth dart its rayes with the clearer splendor, snuff it so nearly, that they extinguish it quite; and leave us nothing but the stink of its snuff; like some curious Physicians, who purge so frequently, that they destroy the body entrusted to their cure. We in this Island, have met with some of these *Charletans*, who, I am confident, purged oftner both Church and State, than *Luke*, the beloved Physician, would have prescribed, if we had had the good fortune to have been his patients.

The tallest wit is not able to reach heaven, albeit (I know) many disjoint their wits in stretching them too high in the inquiry of its mysteries. Neither impute I our short-coming in the knowledge of these mysteries, soley to their obstru-

seners, but I believe our meditations are more clouded in relation to these, then really they need to be, because of their innate frailty; for we see, that some who are masters of much reason in things humane, betray much folly in their devotions; wherefore, I am induced to believe, that it fares with the soul in this, as usually it doth with the body, whose pulls are proportionably the weaker, as the thing grasp'd after is plac'd above its true reach. And so these arrogant Pretenders pull but faintly, because they raise their meditations too high on their tip-toes; whereby they are disabled from imploying all their natural vigor, in pulling at these weighty and sublime Truths, which they catch, not by that corner which is nearest, as meaner wits do, (and so are more successful) but endeavour a fetch at what, in Divinity, is highest; by which short, their endevors are fainter, than those whose spirit is of a lesser size. And these

Colossus

Colossus wits, become the greatest Heretics; as those ordinarily are most burnt, whose fingers oftest stir up fires; and as Chirurgions have more cuts and wounds, than any other Mechanicks, who handle not so oft these wounding tools. It is not fit that mortal man should wrestle too much with these mysteries, least his reason, like *Jacob*, be forc'd to come off, halting.

Nothing hath more busied my thoughts than to find a reason why the Heathens, who were as studious and zealous too in the worship of their Gods, as we Christians, did never frequent sermons, nor knew no such part of divine service; whereof (probably) the reason was because their Governors (whose commands amongst them were the sole *worship* of all Ecclesiastic Rites) reason, that Church-men, if they had been learn'd to harangue to the people, would have influenc'd too much that grosse body; which was the reason like-

likewise, why, in the primitive Church (as one of their Historians observes) *ex formula populo prædicabant, tantum antiquitas timebat hæreses.* They preached only approved Sermons: so much did antiquity fear these leaders of the people: a practice, as is reported, lately renewed by the Duke of *Russia*: and this seemeth also to have been the reason, why all Liturgies have prick'd texts for their Preachers, lest if they had been left a freedom in their choice, they had chose such as might in the letter have found best with such seditious Libels as are now obtruded upon the people, in lieu of pious Homilies, at remarkable or festival occasions. Yet, I think, that our late Doctors, who can find all Doctrine in any text, would easily have eluded that cautionic design, if we should parallel the Homilies, which those renowned Fathers have left, as Legacies to posterity, with these, which our age runs after, we would find, that the

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first were pointed lessons of mortification; which, like *Moses* rod, could draw gushes of tears from the rocky hearts of the most obdured sinners: whereas many of these last are but State-gazets, wherein the people are informed, what are the resolves of the civil Magistrate. And whereas their first institution made them Ambassadors of glad-tydings betwixt God and His people, they have made themselves Heraulds to denounce warrs betwixt God's Vice-gerents and His subjects. Thus, *Peter's* successors will oft times, like himself, rather draw the sword than watch for their Master. And since our Saviour hath disarmed them, as He did *Peter*, and filled their hands with the keyes, while who offend them, are sure to get over the head with these, I confess, God hath not left His Church without some skilful Pilots, to lead in His servants, with security, to the harbor of salvation: to whom this Discourse and its Author shall pay all respects.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Strictness of Churches.

MOst of all Churches, do, like doy-maids, lace their bodies so strait, that they bring on them a consumption; and will have the gates of heaven to have been only made for themselves: and as this nigardliness hath possest Churches, from that root hath stem'd the churlishness of some private Christians, who will allow God but a most inconsiderable number of those whom He hath admitted to make up His visible Church. Thus, some Pastors will only admit two or three to be guests at the Lord's Table, allowing no wedding garment, but what is of their own spinning: and others, with their uncharitable hands, blur the names of all their acquaintances out of the Book of Life; as if they were keepers of His

Registers

and Rolls; and will only have seats kept in the Church triumphant, for three or four Sisters, who are so frugal of their devotions, as to spare them at home, to the end they may be liberal in public. But both these should consider, that the new *Jerusalem* is said to have more gates than one, that *John*, in his *Revelation*, tells us, that numberless numbers were seen following the Lamb; and that it is not probable, that the wise Framer of the world made such a spacious dwelling, as heaven, to be inhabited by so inconsiderable a number: whereas hell (hell in the geography of believed tradition) is only the small kernel of this small shell *the earth*. I know, that many are called and few chosen; and that the way is strait, and few enter in at it: But we should consider, that these chosen, are said to be few, in respect only of those many who are called: which is most certain; for ten parts of eleven are Pagans or Mahumetans,

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(and all are called) of that eleventh part, many are malicious Heretics; and amongst the residue many are flagitious and public sinners; So that albeit the greatest part of the regular members of the visible Church were sav'd, yet the number would be small, in comparison of these others. The body of the visible Church, must (like all other bodies) be compounded of contrary elements. And albeit I am not of opinion, that this body should be suffer'd to swell with humors, yet I would not wish, that it should be macerated with purgations. It's nails (though but excrementitious parts) should not be so nearly pared, as that the body may bleed; yet, they should be so pared, as that Christians may not scratch one another. They should feed, not upon blood, but milk; and they are unmannerly guests, who will not suffer others to sit at their Masters table with them. It pleases my humor to contemplate, how, that albeit all Religions war against one another; yet, are all

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of them governed by the same principles; and even by those principles, in effect, which they seem to abominate. Thus, albeit the cessation of miracles be cryed down by many, yet, do the most bigot relate, what miracles have been wrought by the founders of their Hierarchies, and what prophesies they have oracul-slouy pronounced. And seeing all confess, that God, in our days, breaks the prosperous upon the same Wheel, on whose top they did but lately triumph; making *fortune* adopt the oppreſt in their vice; why should we talk so much of the ceasing of miracles? For, doubtless, these effects are, in policy, as contrary to nature as are the swimming of iron, or sweetning of rivers; or rather more: Seeing in the first, man's will is forc'd (without which, such revolutions could not be effectuated) whereas in the last dull and sensual qualities are only wrested; which as they are not so excellent, so, doubtless, are not

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able to make such resistance as the Soul of man. Yea, I should rather think, that the world being become old, must, doubtless, be more dim-sighted (as all old things are) than formerly; and therefore, God doth now present greater objects of admiration to our eyes than He did formerly. For man is become so atheistical, that if God did not press His meditation, with such infallible testimonies of the Being of an irresistable power, he would, doubtless, shake off all resolutions of submitting. Thus, we see that in all the tract of *John*'s Revelations, miracles grow still more frequent, the nearer the world draweth to its grave; and, like all other bodies, the weaker it becomes, the more subject it is to all alterations, and the less is nature able to resist. And it would appear, that if miracles were requisite at first, for the establishment of Religion, even when no older Religion was to cede it, and to make an exit at its entry; much more,

should

should miracles be necessary, for fixing any Religion against the received constitutions of a previously setled Church. But to prosecute my first design, it is remarkable, that albeit infallibility be not, by all, conceded to any militant Church; yet, it is assumed by all: Neither is there any Church under the Sun, which would not fix the name of heretic, and account him (almost) reprobate, who would refuse to acknowledge the least rational of their Principles: and thus these Church-men pull up the ladders from the reach of others, after they have by them scal'd the walls of preferment themselves. That Church-men should immerse themselves in things civill, is thought excentric to their sphere, even *in ordine ad spiritualia*: And yet, even the *Capuchins*, who are the greatest pretenders to abstract Christianity and Mortification, do, of all others, dipth most in things civil. The *Phanatics* enveigh against Presbyterian Gowns. The *Presbyter-*

ian tears the Episcopal lawn Sleeves, and thinks them the whore of *Babel*'s shirt. The *Episcopist* flouts at the popish Robes, as the livery of the beast. The *Antinomian* emancipates his disciples from all obedience to the Law. The *Protestant* enjoyns good works, and such are commanded, but place no merit in them. The *Roman-Catholic* thinks he merits in his obedience. The *Phanatic* believes the Lord's Supper but a ceremony, though taken with very little outward respect. The *Presbyterian* allowes it, but will not kneel. The *Episcopist* kneels, but will not adore it. The *Catholic* mixeth adoration with his kneeling. And thus, most of all Religions are made up of the same elements, albeit their asymbolic qualities predomine in some more than in others. And if that maxime hold, that *majus & minus non variant speciem*, we may pronounce all of them to be one Religion.

The Church, like the River *Nilus*,

can badly condescend where it's head lies; and as all condescend that the Church is a multitude of Christians; so joyn all their opinions, and you shall find that they will have it to have, like the multitude, many heads. But in this (as in all Articles, not absolutely necessary for being saved) I make the Laws of my country to be my Creed: and that a clear decision herein is not absolutely necessary for Salvation, is clear from this, that many poor Clowns shall be saved, whose conscience is not able to teach their judgments how to decide this controversie, wherein so many heads have been confounded, so many have been lost, and so many have been shrewdly knockt against one another; from which flinty collisions, much fire, but little light, hath ever burst forth.

God, by His Omniscience, foreseeing, that it was too dazeling a sight for the pur-blind eyes of man's Soul, to behold Him, invironed with

made a Collasterion betwixt the Ca-
the rayes of divine Majesty, did be-
stow upon us, three mirrors, where-
in we might contemplate Him (as we
use to look upon the Sun in a tub of
water, not daring to eye His native
splendor) the one was the mirror of the
Law, the second is the works of the
Creation, and the third is the Soul of
man; which He Himself hath told us is
framed after His own glorious Image.

As for the first mirror, the Law; God
knowing that *instinct*, or, as we term it,
a natural conscience, were compleat Di-
gests of all that man was to observe, He
did make that mirror very little, a vo-
lum of only two pages; but that mirror
is, of late, so mullered about, by margi-
nal Notes and Commentors, that the
mirror it self is almost over-spread by
them; and it is very observable, that in
the holy Registers, the Law is still a-
bridged, but we never see it enlarg'd:
For, albeit the fundamental Laws of
both Tables were packed up in nar-
row bounds, yet our Saviour sums

them

them in these two, *fear the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, and *love thy neighbour as thy self*. And the Apostle *Paul*, in his Divine Epistles, professes, that he desires to know only Christ, and Him crucified: So, that I am confident, that if our Saviour were to preach in Person, once more to the world; He would enveigh against our Casuists, as much as He did against the Jewish Talmudists; for, the one, as well as the other, are equally guilty of burdening the shoulders of weak Christians, with the unnecessary trash of humane inventions. For, I remember to have seen a late Casuist, dispute contentiously amongst his other cases, whether Tabacco, taken in the morning, did break a commanded Fast or not? To which, after a severish conflict, his wisdom, forsooth, returns this oraculous answer; *That if Tabacco be taken at the nose, it breaks not the Fast, but if it be taken at the mouth, then it breaks the Fast.* Which, because I

sists and the Talmudists, I shall only mention, out of the Talmud (which was the *Jews* comment upon the Law) a case, exactly parrallel to this: wherein is decided, that if a man carry a burden on the Sabbath-day, upon both Shoulders, then he is guilty of breach of Sabbath; but that he is not guilty if he carry it upon one shoulder. As to my own private judgment, (which I submit to my spiritual Tutors) I think, that seeing the Conscience of man, is the same faculty with the Judgment, when conversant about Spiritual Imployments, as the word συνειδος, which imports a knowledge reflexive upon a man's own self, doth abundantly evidence) that therefore, as there are Judgments of different tempers; so there are, likewise, Consciences of different frames: and which vary as much amongst themselves, as natural constitutions do. And therefore, as the same Dose would prove noxious to one constitution; wherein another would find his health: so in

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one and the same act, that resolution may be saving to one Conscience, which may condemn another; for seeing God hath kindled a Torch in each man's breast, by whose flame he may see what path he should beat; in which sense it is said, *Prov.* 20. 27. *That the understanding of man is the Candle of the Lord*; and can that light mislead? And seeing man must be answerable according to what it prescribes to him; doubtless it is fitter that he should hearken to the reiterated dictates of his Conscience, than to the resolution of any School-casuist; and that for the same reason, that it is more rational to obey the Law it self, than the wisest Lawyer, who may either be deceived himself, or have a design to deceive others. For if God hath endued man with every thing necessary for working out the work of his own Salvation, with fear and trembling, He hath doubtless bestowed upon him an internal Touch-stone, by whose Test he may discern betwixt good and evil; seeing to

command man to walk uprightly, and not to bestow on him eyes to see the road, were to command a blind man to walk, and to punish him if he went astray. And as the composure of man's body, would be imperfect and maneck, if he wanted a palate to discern betwixt the taste of what is wholesom, or what is putrid; So if the Soul of man were not able to know its own duty, and, by the palate of a natural Conscience, to difference betwixt lawful and unlawful: certainly the soul might be thought to be but ill appointed. Thus, beasts are, by an intrinsic principle, taught their duty, and do accordingly shun or follow what is convenient for them, without consulting any thing from without. And shall man be less perspicacious, or more defective than these? As also seeing man is oftimes, by thousands of occasions, removed far from the assistance of Chair or Pulpit-informers; and in that his retiredness, hath most

moſt of theſe caſes to be reſolved: it were abſurd to think that he then wants ſufficiency of help for their reſolution. And it is moſt obſervable, in Scripture, that men are oft check'd for quenching the Spirit, but never for not conſulting Caſuiſts. I know it may be thought, that when the Soul of man rages at ſometime in a Fever of Luſt, Revenge, or ſome ſuch ſin, that then the Conſcience may rave; Yet I dare ſay, that albeit the Soul, out of an inordinate deſire to enjoy its own pleaſures, may ſet its invention a work, to palliate the ſinfulneſs of what it deſires; yet by ſome ſecret knell, the Conſcience ſounds ſtill its reproof. And I dare ſay, that never man erred without a check from his Conſcience; nor that few have ſinned after an approbation obtained from his Conſcience of what he was about: and when we aſſent to theſe Doctors, is it not becauſe our Conſciences, or our Judgments (which are the ſame) aſſent, to

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what they inform? which evidences that our Consciences are more to be believed, than they, by that rule, *Propter quod unumquodq; est tale*, &c. but to convince us of the folly of our addresses to these Doctors, it may, and often doth fall out, that that may be a sin in me, which a Casuist pronounces to be none: as if my breast did suggest to me, that it were a sin to buy Church-lands; if there-after I did buy them, it were doubtless a sin, albeit my Doctors, following the Canons of their particular Church assured me, that the sale of Church-lands were no sin in it self. I am confident then, that this Casuist-divinity, hath taken its rise from the desire Church-men had to know the mystery of each man's breast, and to the end, nothing of import, might be undertaken without consulting their Cell; persuading men, that *in ordine ad spiritualia*, their Consciences, and consequently their Salvation, may be interested in every civil affair.) And

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to confirm this, it is most used by *Jesuits* and Innovators, who desire to know all intrigues and subvert all States; whereas the Primitive Church knew no such such Divinity, neither have its Doctors left any such Volumns.

It may be urged, that seeing the Conscience is but a reflex act of the Judgment, that as the Judgment is an unsure guide, the Conscience cannot pretend to be infallible; and that the one, as well as the other, is tutor'd by the fallacious principles of *sense* and *custom*. And I my self have seen my Land-lady, in *France*, as much troubled in Conscience for giving us flesh to eat in Lent, as if she had cast out the flesh of a Christian to be devoured by Dogs; and so Atheism may attribute to custom, these inclinations whereby we are acted on to believe a Deity; and may tell us, that the Mahumetans find themselves as much prickt in Conscience, for transgressing their Prophets Canons, as we for offending against the moral Law. And

thus

thus the adoring of a Deity might have at first been brooded in the Council-chamber of a Statesmans head, and yet might have been, at that time, by the vulgar, and thereafter by the wisest pates, worshipped with profound respects: Yet, if we pry narrowly into this conceit, we shall find in it something of instinct, previous to all forgeries possible. For, what was it (I pray you) which encouraged, or suggested to these Politicians, that such a thing as the Deity might be dissembled to their people for their imposing that cheat, pre-supposed some pre-existing notion of it? Or, how entred that fancy first in their wild heads? Or, how could so many contemporary, yet far distant, Legislators, fall upon the same thoughts, especially, it being so remote from *sense*; and for framing of which *Idea*, their experience could never furnish a patern? Conscience then must be something else than the fumes of Melancholy, or,

Capricio's

Capricio's of Fancy; for else, roaring Gallants, who are little troubled, or can easily conquer all other fancies, would not be so haunted by these pricking pangs; which if they were not infallibly divine, behooved to be meerly ridiculous, and to want all support from reason or experience.

There is another syle of cases of Conscience, which is a Cadet of that same family; and these are such cases as were the brood of these late times, which, like Insects and unclean creatures, may be said *generari ex putri materia*: an instance whereof, was the famous Sifter, who ask'd if she was olig'd to execute her Cat for killing a Mouse upon the Sabbath. This was a Theology, taught by old doting Wives, and studied by State-expectants, who, to gain applause, and in hope to mount Preferment's Saddle, made use of this gilded Stirrop. I shall not inveigh against this foppery, seeing it hath not pos-

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fast mens conceit so long, as to have prescribed the title of Divinity; but, like a Meteor, which, because it is fixt to no Orb, and is but a mass of inflamed vapors, doth therefore disappear immediately, how soon its substance flashes out; and its ashes are now entomb'd in the same clay with its brother twain, that pious Nonsense, wherein God Almighty was treated with in familiar and not inferior.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Scriptures.

AS God did light the Candle of a private Conscience in each private breast; So hath He hung up the lamp of the Scriptures in the body of His Church: and these we may call the Conscience of the Church whilst Militant. Which some, by the breath of their vanity, and storms of their passion, endeavour to blow out; whilest others make no other use of its Light, than to shew them where to find a Jest. And within the arms of this division lie folded all the prophane race of mankind. As to these first (who should be first, because they are Satan's first-born, and so deserve a double portion of this reproof) they contend that the Scriptures are written

written in a mean and low ſtile; are in ſome places too myſterious, in others too obſcure; contain many things incredible; many repetitions, and many contradictions. But theſe miſcreants ſhould conſider; that much of the Scripture's native ſplendor is impaired by its Tranſlators, who fearing to fall within the verge of the curſed, pronounced againſt ſuch as ſhould pair from, or add to, any thing contained in that divine Book, were, and are willing, that their Tranſlation ſhould want rather the luſtre, then meaning of the Original. As alſo of all Tongues, I believe the Hebrew admits leaſt of a Tranſlation; eſpecially into Northern Languages: for as thoſe Nations differ leaſt in their expreſſions, who, becauſe of their commerce or contiguity, have the moſt frequent converſe: So doubtleſs the *Jews* and we, by this Rule, ſhould, in language, hold the leaſt correſpondence. And becauſe there is no pure Fountain of this Tongue left,

beſides

beſides the Bible, it muſt be hard to underſtand its expreſſions, wherein the Tranſlators can find little or no help from the variety and collation of Authors. And ſeeing this Book was penn'd indifferently, for all Ages, Nations, and Sexes, it was fit that its ſtile ſhould have been condeſcending: for thoſe who are tall, can pull the fruit which hangs low, whereas thoſe who are low, cannot pull what pearches high. And it is very obſervable, that where the fruit is greateſt and ripeſt, there the branch whereon it hangs, bows loweſt. When God appeared to *Elijah*, 1 *Kin.* 19. there came firſt a terrible wind, thereafter a great earthquake, and then fire; and yet God was in none of theſe, but ſpoke in the ſhrill, ſmall voice. His divine Providence hath ſo order'd it, that our conviction cannot be aſcrib'd to the faid of Eloquence not ſlight of Logick, but meerly to the truth of what is therein repreſented: our Saviour, will, with clay and ſpittle

ſpittle, illuminate our eyes, as He did thoſe of the other blind man in the Goſpel. And ſuch is the ſtrength of His divine Arm, that He can vanquiſh Sathan, misbelief and ignorance with any weapon. And as we think the Sun's circumference but little, becauſe it is ſituated ſo far above us: So we conclude theſe truths and excellencies but mean, becauſe they are plac'd above our frail reach, and will blame the Scriptures, when the fault ſtinks in our ſelves; that great Phyſician will cure us, like an artiſt, with ſimples ſpecifick for our diſeaſe, and not like a *Charletan*, with perfumed and gilded nothings. It is not alway the beſt metall, which carries the pleaſingeſt *impreſſa*, nor doth the the painted candle caſt the cleareſt light. There are many things in Scripture, which, becauſe of our frailty, appear (like a ſtaff in the waters) to be crooked, albeit they be ſtraight. Why *Abraham* ſhould have kill'd his ſon *Iſaac*; or the *Iſraelites*

have

have borrowed and not restored the Ægyptian Ear-rings, staggers not my belief; for these belong'd to God, and neither to *Abraham*, nor the *Egyptians*: and so God might have given order to any He pleased to receive them: and those who obeyd, were no more guilty than such are, who, by order from the Master, receive what he did formerly lend to others. And as to its repetitions, they differ, no doubt, from one another, albeit we (who think all things removed, though by a little distance from us, of one shape) judge ill, in judging otherwise. And as an excellent person hath well observed, God hath appointed these reiterated expressions, to be as so many witnesses, to convince Heretics and others, who should call the meaning of any one place in question, or wrest it by what precedes or follows it.

As to those others, in whom the Wine of Gods consolations, (by being

ing winded in the crack'd veſſels of their heads) turns into the tart vinegar of prophane Satyres, I condole their condition: for, that ſtomach muſt be very corrupt, wherein the beſt of aliment putrifies moſt; and probably, that indigeſted milk, being converted into excrementitious bile and humors, may caſt them in a fever which ſhall never cool to all eternity. I pitty likewiſe thoſe, who, out of an inadvertent (and as they think, finleſs) humor, jeſt with theſe divine truths; like fooliſh children, who love rather to ſport with their meat than eat it. Theſe, albeit they intend not to prophane Scripture, yet, they vilifie it: And we may ſay of the Bible, as of taking of God's name in our mouths, which muſt not only not be done upon deſign, to blaſpheme and diffame Him; but muſt not be taken but upon neceſſity, and, like the Shew-bread, muſt be uſed only when we are in ſtraits. I have been too guilty of this laſt ſin

my ſelf; and therefore, leſt I ſhould make no atonement, I have rather reſolved to appear before the world, in the duſt and ſackcloth of this ſilly Diſcourſe, a Pennance, really, to me, very great.

When I conſider how various and innumerable are the actions of men, and that in all theſe, they need particular inſtructions from above the Poles, I admire why there are ſo many paſſages in Scripture, from which our neceſſity may expect no aſſiſtance. And therefore leſt I ſhould think, that in Scripture there is any waſte of words, I am induced to believe, that there run many hid Allegories from *Geneſis* to *John's Revelations*; wherein the myſtical ſenſe deſerves likewiſe the name of God's word: Might we not have admired why the Story of *Hagar* and her baſtard is there voluminouſly deſcribed, and what the Church or private Devotion was concerned therein, if *Paul*, *Gal.* 4. 24. had not diſcovered

the myſtery to us? By which things, another thing is meant: For, theſe two mothers are the two Teſtaments, the one which is *Agar*, of mount *Sinai*, which gendereth unto bondage, *&c.* I might here relate many excellent Alluſions to prove this, but I ſhall ſatisfie my ſelf with one which I did read in one Doctor *Everot*; who preaching upon *Joſhua*, 15. 16. *Then* Caleb *ſaid, he who ſmiteth* Kirjath-ſepher *and taketh it, even to him will I give* Achſah *my daughter to wife, And* Othniel *took it*, &c. ſaith, that *Caleb* ſignifies a *good heart*, *Kirjath-ſepher* the *City of the Letter*, *Achſah* the *Viſion*, *Othniel God's opportunity*. And ſo the myſtical ſenſe runs; a good heart ſaith, that whoever will take in (and ſmite, as *Moſes* did, the rock) the Letter of the word, ſhall have the viſion which lurks under it diſcovered and given to him. And God's own time is the only mean for accompliſhing this: As alſo, it is moſt remarkable, that City which was called

Kirjath-

Kirjath-ſepher before it was taken in, or, *the city of the Letter*, was, after it was conquered, called *Debir*, which ſignifies *an Oracle*; ſo that the Word, or Letter is no Oracle, till it be once, as it were, taken in and overcome. Since the reading of which Sermon, I believe that one may profit more by an Hebrew Lexicon, than by a thouſand Engliſh Lectures.

Thoſe who detract from Scripture, by attributing the production of Miracles, to natural cauſes, do not much diſparage the power of God, but (though againſt their depraved intention) cry rather up his omnipotency: For certainly, if theſe miracles were produced by ſecondary cauſes, then doubtleſs, that productive faculty was beſtowed upon them by the Almighty; and if he can make the creatures produce ſuch ſtrange effects, much more is he able to effectuate them, himſelf; as it is more difficult, for a great Maſter, to form curious and admirable Charact-

ers when he leads a ſcholars hand, than when he writes them with his own; for, ſuch help may be called *reſiſting aſſiſtance.* I cannot likewiſe but blame many of our Preachers, who rather break than open holy Texts; and rather make new meanings, ſuiting with their private deſigns, than tell the meaning of the Spirit. Who would not have laugh'd to hear a Presbyterian obſerve, from the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, firſt verſe, that whilſt *Moſes* relates what God made, he ſpeaks nothing of *Biſhops*; by which it was evident (ſaid *Don Quixot*'s Chaplain) that *Biſhops* were not of divine Inſtitution: a conceit as ridiculous as that of a Prieſt, who hearing *Maria* ſpoken of for to ſignifie *Seas*, did brag that he had found *the Virgin Mary* named in the old Teſtament. Albeit I think preaching no part of divine Worſhip, hearing being no adoration; yet, love I to go to Church, were it but to ſee a multitude met together, to confeſs

feſs that there is a God: But, when I go to hear I care not whom, knowing that Chriſt elected Fiſher-men to preach down infidelity, when it was in the ruff of it's pride: and that *Paul* (the moſt ſignal Trophee of our Chriſtian Faith) was ſent for confirmation, not to *Peter*, or *James* at *Jeruſalem*, but *Ananias*, one of the meaneſt amongſt the Diſciples. And ſeeing our Salvation, by preaching, is a miracle; it is ſtill ſo much the greater, by how much weaker the inſtruments are. When the Pulpit was a mount *Sinai*, from which the Law was thundered, or a mount of *Olives*, whereon our Saviours glorious transformation was to be ſeen, then were Sermons to be honoured; but ſince it is become a mount *Calvar*, whereon our bleſſed Saviour ſuffers daily, by ſcandalous railings, Sermons are become unſavoury, for the moſt part. I hate to ſee that divine place made either a Bar, whereat ſecular quarrels are, with paſſion, pleaded

pleaded; or a Stage, whereon revenge is, by Satyres, satisfied; or a School-chair, from which unintelligible questions are mysteriously debated; but amongst all these innovations, introduced be our infant Divines, I hate none more than that of giving reasons for proving the *Doctrine*, which being Scripture it self, can be proved by nothing that is more certain. As for instance, when the Doctrine is, *that God loved us freely*, how can this be proved more convincingly than thus, *my Text sayes it?* and that is *idem per idem*, a most unlogical kind of probation. When I then go to Church, I should love to spend my time in praises and prayers; which as they are the only parts of adoration, so are they the natural imployments of the Church, either Militant or Triumphant: Yet, it displeases me to hear our young Pulpitires scritch and cry, like *Baal's* Priests, as if God were no nearer them than the visible Heavens.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Moral Law.

IT honours much our imployment, that God Almighty was the first and great Law-giver; and that our blessed Saviour stiles himself our Advocat. And it is an amazing wonder that we are tyed only by ten Laws; whereof seven were enacted doubtless for our advantage and respect; more immediately the security of the creature than the honor of the Creator; and are such restraints as men behoved to have laid upon one another, and which nature lays upon us all. And albeit I laugh at the Jewish Cabala, which says, that the moral Law was written, two thousand years before *Moses*, in black letters at the back of a clear burning fire: Yet, can I not approve *Tertullian's* wit, who endeavours to find all these ten in the

the prohibition made to *Adam.* There are indeed some sins which scarce a consequence can bring within the verge of these Commandments. As for instance, Drunkennes: Yet, these are such as are so destructive to our natures, that there needs no Law be made against them. So that the Priest hit witily, to whom that sin being confessed, enjoyned, as a Pennance, their being drunk a second time; which makes me conclude, that if Drunkennes were to be ranged under any of these Laws, it would fall most naturally under that, *Thou shalt not kill.* Albeit the fourth Commandment seems to respect only the honour of God, and that the creature seems to be no ways bettered by it: Yet, our more serious observation will discover, that all belabouring creatures, as it were, expect an ease the seventh day more than any other. Whether it be, that nature is by custom framed to that expectation, I cannot tell: But, we see that God

choic'd

choic'd that number to be the year of Jubile amongſt his own people, and that it is the period of all the ſeveral conſiſtencies in our life, infancy, puberty, &c. And for this reaſon Phyſicians obſerve, that the child born in the ſeventh month is ſtronger than that which is born in the eighth; becauſe in the ſeventh it is come to a knot, by paſſing whereof, in the eighth it is in a ſtate of imperfection; But, what the myſtery of this holy Climacteric is, I refer till we come to that Sabbath of Reſt, whereat we ordinarily arrive after ſeven times nine years hath ſnowed upon us.

We may think, that if God had intended, that one and the ſame day of the week ſhould have been appropriated to have been a Sabbath, He had deſigned each day by a ſpecial term, and had commanded, that a day of ſuch a deſignation, ſhould have been ſequeſtrated for a Sabbath; and that by deſigning only the ſeventh day He did leave a liberty to employ any

any day of the ſeventh for that uſe. Yet, it is remarkable, that *Moſes* nor the Jewiſh Church durſt not attempt the change of their new-years day; but that the Almighty was pleaſed to beſtow a peculiar ſanction upon that alteration: For, *Exod.* 12. 2. He commands, that the month wherein the Iſraelites came from *Egypt*, ſhould be, by them, reputed the firſt month of their year. Wherefore, ſeeing each Nation chalks out a divers Sabbath, it would appear that there is ſomething of humor in it, as well as of Religion. The *Venereous* Mahumetan chooſeth Friday, or, *dies Veneris*; The *dull Jew* dull *Saturns day*; The *warlick* Pharthians Tueſday, or, *Mars's day*. The *cheery* Europeans *Sunday*. And albeit the Chriſtians are influenced only by inſpiration; yet, I am confident, that the heathens did follow that for Religion, which ſuited beſt with their natural temper. But this is a meditation which ſhould travel no where beyond a mans pri-

vate

vate breast, lest it meet with enmity and beget scandal.

It would puzzle a heathen much to hear, that he who breaks one of these Laws is guilty of the breach of all: But, it troubles not me, seeing all these Laws are made to shew our obedience, and the breach of any one of them shews our contempt of him who is the author of all. And it may be this was typified in *Moses*'s breaking both Tables, with one passionate fling, after he came down from the Mount: For, if this breaking of them had not been pre-designed for some hid end, doubtless he had been reproved for his negligence. However, we may from this learn the desperate nature of passion, which made *Moses*, who was the meekest man upon earth, break all the Laws of God in one act. It might be also argued, that seeing all the Laws of the second Table were enacted for, and respect ultimately, the advantage of Man, that where man

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is not wronged, there the Law cannot be broke. And thus, if a married Man should have liberty from his wife to take another woman, this could be no more reputed adultery, than it could be reputed theft to take what belongs to our neighbour, himself consenting; and that for this cause, *Jacob's* begetting children with his wifes maids, is not in Scripture reproved as adultery, because they were given to him by her self, for that effect; but seeing the practice of all the world condemns this conclusion, far be it from me to express it farther; yet this is but a sophism, for seeing our bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, we can no more bestow them upon such uses, than a Church-Warden can give the use of the Church to Taverners.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the Judicial Law.

Albeit the Judicial Law (which may be justly called the Judicious Law) is commonly reputed to be but the municipal Law of the Jews; yet seeing it was delivered, in almost one contexture, with that Law which was thundred from mount Sinai with so much pomp, and is ingroft in the Books of holy Truth, and seems nearer related to reason than any other Law; I admire why it should not be religiously observed by all Nations: especially seeing, as it is, the exactest picture of Justice that ever was drawn; so it hath this of a picture in it, that it seems to look directly upon all who behold it; albeit they be placed (amongst themselves) in directly oppolite situations and stances. Thus this Law suits even with

contrary tempers, and the unequal complexions of all Nations. I know that the Ceremonial Law is likewise inserted amongst the other holy Canons, and yet binds not us who live under the jurisdiction of the Gospel: But, the reason of this seems to be, because these did immediately concern the *Jewish* Church, and were conversant about these holy things. And so, seeing the Old Testament is a description of their Hierarchy, and of God's way of working in those times, I wonder not to see the Ceremonies amidst other sacred Truths, and yet not observed, seeing they are expresly abrogated. But, if the judicial Law, which respected not the Hierarchy of that Church, was obligatory only whilest the *Jewish* State was in Being, I admire why the Spirit of God took so much pains, first to pen it, and then to deliver it so Canon-like to posterity. And since it is a principle in Law and Reason, that Laws must still stand in vigor till they be expresly abrogated,

abrogate, and must not be derogated from by consequences or presumptions. I admire why this Law, which God hath enervated by no expres Text, should be now look'd upon as Statutes no wise *A-la-mode*. It is true, that our Saviour, when the woman, convicted of adultery, was brought to Him, did not, according to that Law, pronounce the sentence of death against her; whence some think, that Church-men, following their Masters example, should not give their suffrages in criminal cases, and have only δικην αναιμακτον, a bloodless Jurisdiction; for, they are appointed to be Nurses, not Chyrurgeons. But, it is as true, that our Saviour professed in all the tract of His life, that He came not to be a Judge in things temporal, and His design in that place, was only to convince them of their own sins, and not to absolve her, nor to abrogate the Law; and therefore He desired him, who was freest from sin, to cast the first stone at her. And

whereas it is conjectured, that those words which our Saviour stoop'd down to write in the day, immediately thereafter was an abrogation of that Law; this is Geomancy more wilde then any lesson which is alledged to have been read in the Mysterious face of Heaven, and should never be taught but in a Rabbies Cabalistic Gown. And whereas it is alledged that there are ny precepts in that *corpus Juris*, which respects only the humor of the *Jews*, I admire why that can be urged; for certainly, theft, murder, and those other crimes punished there, are the same crimes which reign amongst us; and so why not punishable after that same manner? Neither are the humors of these *Jews* more different from ours, than was the *genius* of the *Romans*; and yet, few or no Nations refuse to cast their modern Laws in that antique mold. And it is very probable, that as God did, in the moral Law, teach man how to be just in his own actions; so He would likewise instruct

him

him by a judicial Law, how to administrate Justice to others.

What can perpetuate a Law more than that the Authority whereby it is enacted should be obligatory in all ages; and the reason whereon it is founded should be eternal? and in what Laws do these two qualities appear more, or so much, as in the judicial Laws of the *Jews*, where the eternal Law-giver was Legislator, and the occasion, productive of them, seemed rational (and necessary) to His infallible omniscience? and if in any of these statutes, our purblind Judgments cannot see a present convenincy, we should rather impute that to our own simplicity, than charge it as a guilt upon His divine Statutes. And are there not many municipal Laws in each Country, which have no hedge about them to keep them untrampled upon by wanton and too curious wits? But, that excellent Maxime, *Omnium quæ fecerunt Majores nostri, non est reddenda ratio, neque*

quæ certa sunt, incerta redderentur; a reason must not be rendred for all that our Ancestors have enacted, lest what is now certain, become then uncertain. Albeit a Law enacted only by humane Authority, seem unreasonable or inconvenient; yet, it retains its vigor till it be abrogated by the same, or an higher Authority, than that whereby it was first statuted; and the Law sayes, that *nihil est tam naturale quam unumquodque eodem modo dissolvi quo colligatum est.* And, seeing the moral and judicial Laws are twisted so together, and are oft incorporated in one statute, as *Lev.* 20. 10. *Deut.* 22. 22. where adultery is forbidden, and the adulterer is to die the death: how can we think the one half of this Law obligatory for ever, and yet neglect it's other half, wherein the punishment is specified, and which appears to have been the scope of the divine Law-giver? For, the world needed not so much to have been acquainted, that adultery was a sin, as that that sin deserved death;

and if we allow our capricious humor the liberty to reject what we think inconvenient we may, at last, arrive at that pitch of licentiousness, as to abrogate, by our practice, whatever chocks our present humor.

There are many things much mistaken in that Law, which makes the dissonancy betwixt it and our Law, appear so much the greater. As for instance, it is concluded, that by that Law, no theft was punishable by death; whereof this is given as a reason, because there is no proportion betwixt the goods and life; and that all that a man hath he will give for his life: whereas this argument would prove, that no guilt but murder should be punished with death; and so this dart rather flees over than hits the mark at which it is level'd. And if this argument concluded, why should adultery have been punished with death by that Law, seeing there seems no proportion betwixt that guilt and death? for if *vita & fama*

be in Law *equiparat*, by that same Law, *pecunia est alter sanguis*, but if there be no proportion betwixt goods and life, and if the punishment of theft, when it's aggrag'd to it's greatest height, cannot, in their opinion, reach so far as to be capital; why was it that by that Law nocturnal theives might have been killed by those who found them? *Exod.* 22. 2. For it appears against reason, that more should be permitted to a private and passionate party, than to a disinterested Judge. And it is clear by 2 *Sam.* 12. 5. theft was in some cases capital. For there *David* vows, that he who took his neighbours one sheep, and spared his own many, should surely die; which being spoke by a just King to an excellent Prophet, and not reproved, must not be thought a flash of passion, but a well-founded sentence. Were not likewise two theeves crucified by the Jews at the same time with our even glorious Saviour? which must not be

thought a *Romish* execution, seeing the Law of the *Romans* allowed no such punishment for theft; I judge therefore, the reason why murder and adultery were punished with death, rather than all thefts, to have been, because theft may be repaired by restitution, but murder and adultery cannot. And albeit the judicial Law commands restitution only in the theft of an ox or sheep, (things of small moment, and which may be stollen to satisfie rather hunger than lust) yet I see no limits set to Judges, commanding them not to inflict a capital punishment in extraordinary cases. For certainly, he who steals, may, for ought he himself knows, be about the committing of murder, seeing to steal what should aliment any poor one, is, in effect, the same thing as to murder him. It is much controverted, if this Law prohibits self-murder, and I think it doth: For, we are commanded to love our neighbor as our self; and so, since we are commanded

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ed not to kill our neighbour, that same Law must likewise forbid our killing of our selves. But the reason probably, why no express Text did forbid that sin, was, because the Spirit of God knew that the natural aversion we have against death, would, in this, do more than supply a Law; and that those who would be so desperate as to neglect the one would never be so pious as to obey the other. Or else, God hath been unwilling, by making such a Law, to intimate to the world, that such a sin might be committed. Yet, it seems strange, that many are in Scripture related, as *Saul*, and others, to have killed themselves, against whom no check stands registred in holy Records. But, I stop here, intending to bestow, a whole Tract upon the judicial Law, a task hitherto too much neglected.

The second Mirror, wherein God Almighty is to be seen, is that of His Creatures: and in that a *Virtuoso* may contemplate

contemplate in His infinite power, as in the other he may see His admirable justice. It is very observable, that when God, or His Prophets, would prove His greatness, the Sun, Orion, and the Leviathan, are made use of as arguments. And when the Spirit of God describes the inimitable knowledg of *Solomon*, bestowed upon him by God, as an extraordinary mark of His favor, he sayes not, that he understood the quirks of Philosophy, or notions of Divinity; but, it is said, that he knew all, from the Cedar of *Lebanon* to the Hysope that grows upon the wall. And, in earnest, it is strange, that when man comes into the gallery of this World, he should take such pleasure in gazing upon these ill-drawn fictions, which have only past the pencil of humane wit, and should not fix his admiration upon those glorious creatures, which are the works of that great Master; in framing whereof God is content to be said to have,

spent

spent six days, to the end, that man might admire the effects of so much pains; whereas His omnipotency might, with one *fiat*, have summon'd them all to appear, apparell'd in these gorgeous dresses which now adorns them. And it is as strange, that man, having that huge volumn of the Creation to revolve, wherein is such an infinite number of curious tale douces, to feast his eyes with curiosity, and to furnish his solid knowledge; he should notwithstanding spend so much oyl and sweat, in spinning out *entia rationis*, *materia prima*, *potentia obedientialis*, and such like unintelligible trash, which, like cob-webs, are but envenomed dust curiously wrought. And because the Gross of mankind was so gross, as not to understand God's greatness by the abstract *ideas* which instinct presented to him: Therefore, to reach that sensual croud, by the trunch-manrie of sense He hath bestowed upon them this mirror, wherein they may see how

infinite

infinite He is in power, who made *Nothing* so fruitful, as to bud forth in this glorious crop of creatures, which now inhabit the surface of Heaven and Earth.

CHAP. XI.

Of Monsters.

I Admire that such Philosophers as have had their faces wash'd at the Font, can allow of Monsters, and define them to be the preter-intentional works of nature, wherein nature miss'd of her design, and was not able to effectuate what she intended: For, if *nature* and *providence* signifie the same thing in the Dictionary of Christianity, it were blasphemy to think, that *Providence* could not be able to effectuate what it once designed. All the creatures are, indeed, but as clay in the hand of this great

Potter;

Potter; but, it were impious to think, that His Art can be mistaken in framing any Vessel: wherefore, I am apter to believe, that all these creatures which the Schools term *Monsters*, are rather the intentions than errors of *nature*; and that as *nature* doth nothing without design, so it doth nothing without success. And thus I rather admire nature in these, for her cunning variety, then upbraid her with insufficiency and weakness. Neither term I an Hermaphrodite, man or woman, according to the prevalency of that Sex which predomines in it; no more than I think that the Painter, when he hath delineated curiously an exact Mermaid, resolved to draw either a woman, or a fish, and not one distinct creature, pieced up of both. And doubtless this error did at first proceed from man's vanity; who concluded, that every frame which answered not that *idea*, which resides in him, was the effect of *chance*, and not of *nature*; as if *nature* had been obliged to leave in the bi-

bliotheck

bliotheck of his head, the Original of all such Pieces as was to pass it's press.

Seeing God, in His survey of the Creation, called all that He had made *good*, because they were useful, I conclude, that those are the best which are the most useful. And albeit I condemn prodigality of ignorance; in preferring a Diamond to a Capon or Sheep; yet, do I not condemn such of vanity, as shine with these sparkling creatures: For, since God made *nothing*, which He did not destinate for some use, and seeing most of these serve for no use else, doubtless, the wearing of them is most allowable. Yet, can I not allow of those gaudy compounds, which men create to themselves; as if something had been still wanting after the Creation was finished; wherein Man could supply God, and Art Nature. The bestowing of an hundred pounds upon a Tulip, or a thousand on a Picture, are not to me the meer rants of luxury; but are courses pre-ordained by

by the Almighty, for returning to poor Artisans, that money, which oppression did at first most injustly screw from their weary hands. It is our ignorance of natures mysteries which perswades us, that some, if not most, of the creatures, serve rather for beautifying the universe, than for supplying necessity; an error which experience daily confutes: So, those herbs which of old cloathed only the uninhabited mountains, do now deserve their own place in Apothecaries shops. And it is most observable, that the Scurvy grows no where but where the disease rages, which is cured by it. Seeing God loved variety in the Creation, He cannot hate curiosity in man; these two being correspondents: and the one without the other would be but as flowers to the blind, or as musick to the deaf. I laugh at the fruitless pilgrimages of such as travel to *Joppa* or *China*, to satisfie their curiosity; there being a *Troglodytick* closet in each Tulip, and a Solomon's

lomon's Court in each Lilly of the field. And seeing mens tempers are so various, it was no wonder that the creatures (which were made for his use) should have been made proportional to his humor: But, seeing Art hath, in many things, copied Nature to the life, I think not the Symmetry nor variety to be seen amongst the creatures such an infallible argument for proving the Being of God; as is *instinct*, which all the art of men and Angels cannot counterfeit; and herein is it, that that grand Magician must acknowledge the finger of his Maker, seeing here his own art fails.

Those who expect equal excellency in all the parts of this curious Fabrick, do not understand wherein its Symmetrie consists. All the strings of an Instrument sound not equally high, and yet they make up the harmony: the face of the earth looks in some places deform'd and patch'd; and yet it is there the mother of rich

mines (as if God intended to bestow a great portion where He bestows an ill face) and what we think deformities, were placed there as patches, and are no more blemishes, than the spots are to the Leopards.

I confess, that at first it puzled much my enquiry, for what end these Mountains were made so near neighbours to the divided clouds: and I once imagin'd, that these were rather the effects of the flood, than creatures at first intended; and were but the rubbish and mud which these impetuous waters had heap'd up in a mass: But, I was thereafter dissuaded from this conjecture, by the 8. Chap. *Prov.* where wisdom, proving it's antiquity, says, that it was with God before the Heavens were prepared, and the Mountains setled; by the scope of which Text, it is clear, that the Heavens, Hills, and the rest of the Creation, are said to bear one date. It is then more probable, that God foreseeing that the

lust

luſt of conqueſt would, like the Needle of the Compaſs, look on North; as is evident by comparing all the Monarchies (firſt the *Aſſyrian*, then *Grecian*, then *Roman*, now *German*) did therefore bound ambition, as it were with high Hills, (albeit ſince Ambition hath found a way to climb over them) as if He told them, that they ſhould march no further. Thus, it is very obſervable, that the northern parts of one Kingdom, are alwayes more barren than the Southern limits of the Countrey which lies to the North of it. The North of *England* more mountainous and barren than the ſouth of *Scotland*, albeit it lye nearer the Sun, the South of *England* more pleaſant and fertile than the North of *France*; and the South of *France* than the North of *Italy*, &c.

We muſt likewiſe conſider, that nature bruiſed its face ſo when it fell in *Adam*, that it did then contract many of theſe blemiſhes which now

deform it; and that as it waxes old, its native beauty is the more deformed by furrowed wrinkles. We cannot judge what it was in health, by its present distempered condition, wherein it groans and travelleth in pain, as the Apostle tells us. And the differences betwixt these two states may be known from this, that God, when He compleated the Creation, saw that all was good; whereas *Solomon*, having reviewed it in his time, saw all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAP. XII.

Of Man, and his Creation.

THe third Mirror, wherein God is to be admired, is *Man*. This is that noble creature which God was pleased to mould last of all others, not willing to bring him home, till by the preceding Creations He had plenished his house abundantly for him. And albeit in the creation of all other creatures, it is only said, that God spoke and it was: Yet, when Man was to be framed, the cabinet Council of Heaven was called, and it is said [*let us*] as if more Art had been to be shewed here than in all the remanent Fabric of the terraqueous Globe, and glorious Circles of Heaven. It is likewise very observable, that albeit all the fishes of the Sea were formed by one word, all the beasts of the field by

one act, &c. Yet, God was pleased to bestow two upon the creation of *Man*; by the first, his body was created out of the dust, and thereafter, was breathed in, his soul. And albeit transient mention is only made of all other Creations; yet the History of Mans Creation is twice repeated, once, *Gen.* 1. 27. and again, 2. 7. And, lest that foreseen deformity, wherewith he was to be besmeared after his fall, should make it be questioned, that at his first creation he had receiv'd the *impressa* of God's Image, this is oft repeated: For, in the 26. *v. Gen.* 1. it is said, *Let us make man in our image*; and then again, *and after our likeness*. And in the 27. *verse*, *So God created man in his own image*; and again immediately thereafter, *in the image of God created he him*. Yet, I am confident, that this image is so bedaled in the mire of sin, and so shatt'red by its first fall, and this divine *impressa*, and print,

prim, so worn out, by our old vicious habits, that, if this genealogy had not been so oft inculeated, we could not but have called it in question, albeit our vanity be ready enough to believe a descent so royal and sublime. Wherefore I must again admire the folly of Atheists, who, by denying a Deity, cloud their own noble birth-right.

But, albeit man be made after Gods Image, yet, that can be no argument to conclude, that therefore God may be made after mans image, or represented under his figure, as the Anthropomorphites foolishly convend; no more, than if we should conclude, that because a Copy may be taken of an Original, therefore an Original may be taken of a Copy. Neither is this representation salve from being Idolatry, by alledging that the image is not worshipped, but God, who is represented by it. For, it hath been well observed by an ancient Father, that idolatry in Scripture

ture is called adultery. And it is no good excuse for an adulteress, that she did lye with another because he represented her Husband to her, and resembled him as a Copy doth its Original: Yet, seeing nothing is roomed in our judgment and apprehension, but what first entered by the wicket of sense, it is almost impossible for man to conceive the *Idea* of any thing but vested with some shape, as each man's private reflections will abundantly convince him.

As the boundless Ocean keeps and shews its well-drawn images, whilst it stands quiet, with a face polish'd like a chrystal cake, but loses them immediately; how soon its proud waves begin to swell and enrage, to spit its froathy foam in the face of the angry Heavens; so, whilst a Stoical indolency and Christian repose smooths our restless spirits, it is only then, that the soul of man can be said to retain that glorious image of God Almighty, with which

it was impressed at its created nativity. But, when the waves of choler begin to roar, or the winds of vanity to blow, then that glorious image is no more to be discerned in him, than the shadows and representations of in-looking objects are to be seen and discerned in the disquieting bosom of the troubled waters.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the immortality of the soul.

THe stings of a natural conscience, which, according to each mans actings, create to him either agues of fear, or paradises of joy, do by these omniating presages, convince us of the immortality of the soul: and seeing we see its predictions, both in dreams, in damps of melancholy, and such like enthusiastic fits, followed by suitable events; why may we not likewise believe its predictions as to its own immortality; it being the prudence of a *Virtuoso* to lay hold of every mean, which may allay the rage of his hereditary misfortunes? And to what end would the soul of man receive such impressions of fear and hope, if, by its mortality, it were not to be stated in a condition

condition, wherein its fears and hopes were to have suteable rewards or punishments? Moreover, seeing God is just, He will punish and reward: and therefore, seeing he punishes and rewards not men according to their merits, or demerits here, there must be doubtless a future state wherein that is to be expected. But, that which convinces my private judgment most of this truth is, that the noblest Souls, and the sharpest sighted, do, of all others, most desire the state of separation, and have the weakest attachs to this life; which must doubtless proceed from an assurance of immortality, and that it hath, from the *Pisgah* of its contemplation, got a view of the spiritual *Canaan*: For, seeing the brutishest of creatures abhors annihilation, as the most aversable ill in nature, doubtless the soul of man, which is the most divine of all creatures, would never appete this separation, if by it it were to be extinct and to be no more.

more. And how absurd were it to believe, that man's soul should be made after Gods image, and yet conclude it mortal, a quality repugnant to any thing that is divine? As also, how can the soul be thought to perish with the body, seeing these accidents which destroy the body cannot reach it? how can the heat of a fever burn, or rheumes drown, that which is not corporeal and cannot be touched? And, seeing mans least peccadilio against God Almighty, is against one who is infinit, were it not absurd to think, that it could be proportionally punished in the swift glass of mans short life? than which, nothing is more finite, or sooner finished.

As the soul is God's Image, so its products are the Images of His admirable operations. Do not Mathematicians create Eagles, Doves, and such like *Automata's*? And spring not flowers from the Chymists glasses? And thus Art, which is man's offspring,

ſpring, doth ape nature, which is the workmanſhip of the Almighty: and therefore, ſeeing the ſoul can, with one thought, graſp both the Poles, can dart out it's conceits as far as the fartheſt borders of the imaginary ſpaces, create worlds, and order, and diſorder, all that is in this which is already created; it's ſtrange to think it to be either corporeal or mortal: For, if it were corporeal and a maſs of blood, its actings would be lent and dull, neither could its motions be ſo nimble and winged, as are theſe of our agile ſpirits. It were impoſſible for our narrow heads, to inn all theſe innumerable *Ideas* (which are now in them) if theſe were all corporeal; and if theſe be not corporeal, that which produces them muſt be doubtleſs incorporeal, ſeeing *ſimile generatur a ſimili*; and dull fleſh and blood could never produce ſuch ſpiritual emanations.

As the ſoul is Gods Image, ſo, in this it reſembles Him very much, that

we

we can know nothing of its nature without its own assistance: like a dark lanthorn, or a spy, it discovers every thing to us, except it self. And because it refuses us the light of its candle, whilest we are in the quest of its mysteries; therefore it is, that our researches of its nature are gropings in the dark: and so oftimes vain, if not ridiculous. *Avicenna*, *Averroes*, and the remnant of that Arabian tribe, admiring its prodigious effects, did attribute our spiritual motions to assisting Angels; as if such admirable notions could not be fathered upon less sublime causes; which *Cardan* likewise thinks, do offer their assistance and light to sensitive creatures, but that the churlishness of their matter will not suffer them to entertain such pure eradiations. This disparages so much humanity, making man only a statue, that it were against the souls interest to admit of any such *Ideas*: For, as it tends more to the Artists praise its

cause his products move from bid and internal springs, than from extrinsick causes; as we see in Watches and such like. So it is more for the honor of that great Artist, and more suitable to the Being and nature of His creatures, that all its operations flow from it self, than from assisting but exterior coadjutors; which makes me averse from *Aristotle's* opinion, of the motion of the spheres by intelligences. And it were absurd to think, that men should be blamed or praised for those effects which their assessor Angels could only be charged with. The *Platonics* alledged, that all souls existed before their incarceration in bodies; in which state of pre-existence, they were doted with all these spiritual endowments, which shall attend them in the state of separation; and that at their first allyance with bodies, their native knowledge was clouded επιστημης αναβολη, *with the putting off knowledge for a time*, till by a *reminiscentia*, their intelect-

uals

nals revived, as by a resurrection. And *Origen* added, that these souls were, according to their escapes, committed in the state of their primitive separation, yoaked with better or worse bodies; a shift taken, in all probability, by him, to evite the apprehension of God's being unjust, for infusing innocent souls into bodies which would infect them; and, by drawing them into inevitable snares, at last condemn them; or at least their infusion was the imprisoning those who were not guilty; a difficulty which straits much, such as maintain that the soul is not *ex traduce*. What the hazard of this opinion may be, my twilight is not able to discover.

It may be, that the *Stoicks* mistake in making the souls of men to be but parcels, decerpt from that universal *anima mundi* (by which they doubtless meant God Himself) was occasioned by a mistake of that Text, that

God

God breathed into man's noſtrils, the breath of life: concluding, that as the breath is a part of the body which breathed it; ſo the ſoul behoved to be a part of that divine eſſence; from which, by a ſecond conſequence, they concluded, that the ſoul, being a part of that divine Being, could not ſuffer, nor undergo any torments; as is aſſerted by *Seneca, Epiſt.* 29. *Cicero, Tuſc.* 5. and defended by their ſucceſſors, thoſe primitive Heretics, the *Gnoſticks*, *Maniches* and *Priſcillianiſts*. But this Baſtard is not worth the foſtering, being an opinion that God hath parts, and man real divinity; and is doubtleſs a falſe and flattering teſtimony given by the ſoul to it ſelf. For, ſeeing the ſoul is, by divine Oracles, told us to be made after God's Image, it can be no more called a part of God, than the picture ſhould be reputed a part of the Painter.

Ariſtotle, like the Devil (who becauſe he knows not what to anſwer,

answers ever in Engines) tells us, that *Anima* is ἐντελέχεια, a term fixed to exercise the empty brains of curious Pedants, and apter to beget, than explicate difficulties. Neither believe I, that his three souls, which he lodges in man, to wit, the rational, sensitive and vegetative, do differ more amongst themselves, than the will, understanding and fancy differ from the two last: So that his arithmetick might have bestowed five souls upon man, as well as three? But seeing he, and many of his Disciples, believe these to be three, and yet these three to be but one; I admire why they should be so nice, as not to believe that pious mystery of the holy Trinity: whereof, in my opinion, his trinity of the soul is as apposite an emblem, as was the conceit of a simple Clown, who being askt, how he could apprehend the three glorious persons to be but one? did fold his garment in three pleats, and thereafter drew out all three in one.

As the heraldrie of our reason cannot blazon the ſoul's *impreſſa*; ſo can it not help us to line out its deſcent: and ſuch would appear to be the excellency of that noble creature, that Heaven and Earth ſeem to contend, the which ſhall be the place of its nativity. Divines (who are obliged to contend for Heaven, becauſe they are its more immediate Penſioners) will have it to be created and infuſed; whereas Philoſophers (ambitious to have ſo noble a compatriot, and willing to gratifie nature, which aliments their ſublime meditations) contend, that it is *ex traduce*, and is in generation, the bodies other twin. And albeit it would appear from Scripture, that God accompliſh'd the Creation the firſt ſeven days, and that nature did then paſs child-bearing: Yet, that, in my judgment, muſt be meant of the Creation of whole *ſpecies*, and not of *individuals*: And to preſs the ſouls not traduction, I ſhall lend only one argument, not

becauſe it is the beſt, but becauſe it is my own. We ſee, that there where the ſoul is confeſs'd to be *ex traduce*, as in brutes and vegetative creatures, that nature, at it were, with a pencil, copies the young from off the old. The young Lyons are ſtill as rapacious and roaring as were their Syres from whoſe loyns they deſcended: and the Roſe being pous'd up by the ſalt nitre which makes it vegetative, ſpreads the ſame leaves, and appears with the ſame bluſhes or paleneſs that beautified its eye-pleaſing predeceſſors. The reaſon of which continual aſſimulation, proceeds from the ſeed's having, in its boſom all theſe qualities and ſhapes, which appear thereafter in its larger products, whereof they were but a *Map*, or *Index*. Whereas man reſembles never, at leaſt not oft, thoſe who ere called his parents: the vitious and tall father, having oft low, but virtuous children; which ſhows, that the ſoul of man is not derived

rived by generation, and that the ſoul beſtowed upon the ſon's body, is moſt different and aſymbolic to that which lodged in the father. And this may be farther confirmed by that excellent paſſage, *Prov.* 20. 27. where it is ſaid, that the *underſtanding of man is the candle of the Lord.* Our Soul is God's Image, and none can draw that Image but Himſelf; we are the ſtamp of His divine nature, and ſo can only be formed by Himſelf, who is the glorious Seal.

From this divine principle, that man's ſoul is made after God's Image, I am almoſt induced to believe, that *propheſie* is no miraculous gift beſtowed upon the ſoul at extraordinary occaſions only, but is a natural (though the higheſt) perfection of our humane nature: For, if it be natural for the ſtamp, to have impreſs'd upon it all the traits that dwell upon the face of the Seal; then it muſt be natural to the ſoul, which is God's *impreſſa*, to

have a faculty of foreseeing; since that is one of God's excellencies. Albeit I confess, that that Stamp is here infinitely be-dimm'd and worn off; as also, we know, by experience, that men, upon a death-bed, when the soul begins (being detached by sickness from the bodies slavery) to act like it self, do foresee and foretell many remote and improbable events: and for the same reason I do think predictions, by dreams, not to be extraordinary revelations, but rather the products natural of a rational soul. And if sagacious men can be so sharp-sighted in this state of glimmering, as to foresee many events which fall out, why may we not say, that man, if he were rehabilitated in the former state of pure nature, might, without any extraordinary assistance, foresee and propheſie? For, there is not such a distance betwixt that foresight and propheſie, as is betwixt the two

ſtates of innocency and corruption; according to the received notions, which men have ſetled to themſelves of that primitive ſtate of innocency.

From the ſame principle, may it likewiſe be deduced, that natural reaſon cannot but be an excellent mean, for knowing, as far as is poſſible, the glorious nature of God Almighty: He hath doubtleſs lighted this candle, that we might, by it, ſee Himſelf: and how can we better know the Seal, than by looking upon its impreſſion. And if Religion and its myſteryes, cannot be comprehended by reaſon, I confeſs it is a pretty jeſt, to hear ſuch frequent reaſonings amongſt Churchmen, in matters of Religion. And albeit *faith* and *reaſon* be look'd upon as *Jacob* and *Eſau*, whereof the younger only hath the bleſſing, and are, by Divines, placed at the two oppoſite points of the Diameter; yet upon a ſuperficial in-

quiry, it would appear, by the Laws of his Country, that *faith* is but ſublimated reaſon, calcined by that divine Chymical fire of Baptiſme; and that the ſoul of man hath lurking, in it, all thoſe virtues and faculties which we call Theological; ſuch as *faith*, *hope* and *repentance*: for elſe *David* would not have prayed, *Inlighten Lord, my eyes, that I may ſee the wonders of thy Law*; but rather, *Lord, beſtow new eyes upon me.* Neither could the opening of *Lidias* heart, have been ſufficient for her converſion, if theſe preexiſting qualities had not been treaſur'd up there formerly: So that it would appear, that theſe holy flames lurk under the aſhes of corruption, untill God, by the breath of His Spirit (and that wind which bloweth where it liſteth) ſweep them off: And that God, having once made man perfect in the firſt Creation, doth not, in his regeneration, ſuper-add any new faculty (for elſe the ſoul had not at firſt been

been perfect) but only removes all obstructing impediments.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Faith and Reason.

I am always ashamed, when I hear *reason* called the stepmother of *faith*, and proclaimed rebell against God Almighty; and such declared traitors, as dare harbor it, or appear in its defence. These are such fools as they who break their Prospects, because they bring not home to their sight the remotest objects; and are as injust as *Jacob* had been, if he had divorced from *Leah*, because she was tender-eyed: whereas, we should not put out the eyes of our understanding, but should beg from God the eye-salve of His Spirit for their illumination. Nor should we dash the Prospect of our reason, against

gainſt the rocky walls of diſpair; but ſhould rather waſh its glaſſes with the tears of unfeigned repentance.

Ever ſince *faith* and *reaſon* have been, by Divines, ſet by the ears, the brutiſh multitude conclude, thoſe who are moſt reaſonable to be leaſt religious; and the greateſt ſpirits to be the leaſt ſpiritual: a conceit moſt inconſiſtent with that divine parable, wherein thoſe who received the many talents, improved them to the beſt advantage, whilſt he who had but one, laid it up in a napkin. And it is moſt improbable, that God, would chooſe low ſhrubs, and not tall Cedars, for the building of his glorious Temple. And it is remarkable, that God, in the old Law, refuſed to accept the firſt-born of an aſſe in ſacrifice, but not of any other creature. And ſome, who were content to be called *Atheiſts*, providing they were thought Wits, did take advantage, in this, of the *Rables* ignorance, and authorized; by their deviliſh inventi-

on,

on, what was at first but a mistake; and this unriddles to us that mystery; why the greatest Wits are most frequently the greatest Atheists.

When I consider, how the Angels, who have no bodies, sinned before man; and that brutes, who are all body, sin not at all, but follow the pure dictates of nature; I am induced to believe, that the body is rather injustly blamed for Being, than that really it is, the occasion of sin; and probably, the witty soul hath, in this, cunningly laid over upon its fellow, that wherewith it self is only to be charged. What influence can flesh or blood have upon that which is immaterial? no more sure than the case hath upon the Watch, or the Heavens upon its burgessing Angels? And see we not, that when the soul hath bid the body adieu, it remains a carcass, fit nor able for nothing? I believe, that the body being a clog to it, may slow its pursuite after objects; and that it may occasion

casion, indirectly, some sins of omission: For, we see palpably, that eating and drinking dulls our devotions; but, I can never understand how such dumb Orators, as flesh and blood, can persuade the soul to commit the least sin. And thus, albeit our Saviour says, that *flesh and blood did not teach* Peter *to give him his true Epithet*; neither indeed could it: Yet, our Saviour imputes not any actual sin to these pithless causes. And seeing our first sin hath occasioned all our after-sinning, certainly, that which occasioned our first sin was the main source of sinning, and this was doubtless the soul: for, our first sin being an immoderate desire of knowledge, was the effect and product of our spirit, because it was a spiritual sin; whereas had it been gluttony, lust or such like, which seems corporeal, the body had been more to have been blamed for it. And in this contest, I am of opinion, that the soul wins the cause, because it is the best Orator.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Of the fall of Angels, and what their ſin was.

WHat was the occaſion of the firſt ill, is much debated (and moſt deſervedly) amongſt Moraliſts, for, that which was good could not produce that which was evil; ſeeing that which works miſcheif cannot be called good. Nor can we aſcribe the efficiency of the firſt evil to evil: for then the queſtion recurrs, what was the cauſe of that evil? And by, this, the ſuppoſition is likewiſe deſtroyed, whereby the evil enquired after, is ſuppoſed to be the firſt evil: but, if we enquire, what could produce in the Angels that firſt ſin, whereby they forfeited their glory? we will find this diſquiſition moſt myſterious. And it is commonly beleived,

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leived, but by what revelation I know not, that their pride cauſed their fall; and that they catch'd their bruiſe in climbing; in deſiring to be equal to their Creator, they are become inferior to all their fellow Creatures. Yet, this ſeems to me moſt ſtrange, that theſe excellent ſpirits, whoſe very ſubſtance was light, and who ſurpaſſed far, man, in capacity and underſtanding, ſhould have ſo erred, as to imagine that equality feiſable: a fancy which the fondeſt of men could not have entertained. And it were improbable to ſay, that their error could have ſprouted at firſt from their underſtanding; and to think it to have been ſo groſs, as that fallen man doth now admire it: but, why may we not rather think, that their firſt error was rather a crookedneſs in their will, than a blindneſs in their judgment, and that they fretted to ſee Man, whom they knew to be inferior to themſelves, by many ſtages, made Lord of all that pleaſant Creation, which they gazed

on

on with a ſtareing maze. And that this opinion is more probable, appears, becauſe this Sin was the far more baiting, ſeeing it appeared with all the charms, wherewith either pride, vanity or avarice could buſk it; and explicates better to us the occaſion of all that enmity with which that Serpent hath always ſince purſued ſilly man. But, whether God will ſave juſt as many believers as there are fallen of the Angels, none can determine; neither can it be rationally deduced from that Scripture, *Statuit terminos gentium, juxta numerum Angelorum Dei.* But if it pleaſe God ſo to order it, it will doubtleſs aggrage their puniſhment, by rackling their diſdain.

And ſeeing the Angels have never obtained a remiſſion for this crime, it is probable, that the correſpondent of their ſin is, in us, the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt.

The ſin of the Angels was the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt.

For, if their *lapſe* had been par-

donable,

donable, some one or other of them had, in all probability escaped; but, if this was not that unpardonable sin, I scarce see where it shall be found. For, to say that it is a hating of Good, as *God*, is to make it unpracticable, rather than unpardonable: For, all creatures appete naturally what is good, and God, as *God*, is good; So that it is impossible that He can be hated under that reduplication.

It may be likewise conjectured, that voluntary and deliberate sacriledge is the sin against the holy Ghost; because *Ananias* and *Saphira*, in withholding from the Church, a part of the price for which they sold their lands, are, by *Peter*, said to have lyed, not to man, but to the holy Ghost; and his wife is there said to have tempted the Spirit: but, seeing both of them resolved to continue in the Church (a resolution inconsistent with the sin against the holy Ghost) and seeing many sins are more hein-

ous,

pus, I cannot interpret this lying to the holy Ghost to be any thing else but a sin against light, in which most penitents have been involved: albeit I confess this was a gross escape, seeing it rob'd God of His *omniscience*, and supposed that He was not privy to such humane actings as have not the Sun for a witness. I do then conclude, that the sin against the holy Ghost may rather be a resolute undervaluing of God, and a scorning to receive a pardon from Him; and this is that which makes the Angels fall irrecoverably, and like the flaming sword defends them from their re-entry into that Paradise from which they are exiled. And albeit to say, that the Angels rebellion flows from God's denying them repentance, may suit abundantly well with His unstainable Justice; yet it is hard to reconcile it with his mercy. And this makes my private judgment place the unpardonableness of this sin, not in God's Decree, but in their obdu-

ration and rebellious impenitency: And the reason why those who commit this sin are never pardoned, is, because a pardon is never sought. That place of Scripture wherein *Esau* is said to have sought the blessing with tears and not to have found it, astonishes me: Yet, I believe, that if his tears had streamed from a sense of his guilt more than of his punishment, doubtless he had not wept in vain; and in that he fear'd, he was no more to be pytied, far less pardoned, than a Malefactor, who upon the scaffold grants some few tears to the importunity of his tortures, but scornes to acknowledge the guilt of his crime; *for, pain, by contracting our bodies, forces out that liquid matter, which thereafter globe it self in tears*; there could come no holy water from the pagan font of *Esau*'s eyes; and if his remorse could have pierc'd his own heart, it had easily pierc'd Heaven. Whilst others admire, I bless God, that He hath clos'd up the knowledge of that un-

pardon-

pardonable sin under his own privy Seal: for, seeing Sathan tempts me to sin with hopes of an after pardon, this bait is pull'd off his hook, by the fear I stand under, that the Sin to which I am tempted, is that Sin which can expect no Pardon, and albeit it be customary amongst men to beacon and set a mark upon such shelves and rocks as destroy passengers; yet, that is only done where commerce is allowed and sayling necessary; But, seeing all sin is forbidden, God was not obliged to guard us with the knowledge of that sin, no farther than by prohibiting us not to sin, but to stand in awe.

CHAP. XVI.

Of Man's fall.

THat first sin whereby our first Parents forfeited their primitive excellencies was so pitiful a frailty

ty, that I think we should rather lament, than enquire after it. To think that an Apple had in it the seeds of all knowledge, or that it could assimilate him to his Creator, and could, in an instant, sublimate his nature, was a frailty to be admired in one of his piety and knowledge. Yet, I admire not that the breach of so mean a Precept was punish'd with such appearing rigor, because, the easier the command was, the contempt was proportionably the greater; and the foul crimes are by Legislators punished, not only for guilt, but for example. But I rather admire what could persuade the facile world to believe, that *Adam* was created, not only innocent, but even stored with all humane knowledge; For, besides that, we have no Warrant from Scripture for this allegiance, this his easie escape speaketh far otherwise.

And albeit the Scripture tells us, that man was created perfect; yet, that infers not, that man was furnished

shed with all humane knowledge: For, his perfection consisted in his adoring of, and depending upon God, wherein we see those are exactest, whose judgments are least pestered with terrestrial knowledge, and least diverted with unnecessary speculations. And thus it appears, that those Sciences, after which his posterity pants, were not intended as noble *appanages* of that rational soul, but are rather toyish babies buskt up by fall'n man, whereby he diverts himself from reflecting too narrowly upon his native frailty. And thus Scripture tells us, *that God made man perfect, but that he sought out to Himself many inventions*; where perfection and invention seem to be stated as enemies; and it is palpable that those Sciences, which are by us lawrel'd and rewarded, are such as were inconsistent with that state of innocency, such as Law, Theology and Physick. And as for the rest, it is absurd to think, that *Adam's* happiness

did consist in the knowledge of those things which we our selves account either impertinent or superfluous. But, that which convinces me most of this, is that we forfeited nothing by *Adam's* fall, which Christ's death restores not to us; wherefore, seeing Christ by his own, or his Apostles promises, hath not assured us of any sublunary or school knowledge; nor hath our experience taught us, that Sciences are entailed upon the Saints. I almost believe, that *Adam* neither possest these before, nor yet lost them by his fall. Neither think I St. *Paul* the more imperfect, that he desired to know nothing but Christ and him Crucified: So that the difference betwixt *Adam* and his successors, stood more in the straightness of his affections, than in the depth of his knowledge. For, albeit it be believed that the names whereby he baptized the creatures were full histories of their natures, written in short hand; yet, this is

but a conjecture authorized by no holy Text. It is a more civil error in the Jewish Talmudists, to think that all the creatures were brought to *Adam*, to let him see, that there were none amongst them fit to be his companion, nor none so beautiful as *Eve*; than it is in their Cabalists to observe, that the Hebrew word, signifying *man*, doth, by a transposition of letters, signifie likewise, *benediction*; and the word signifying *woman*, makes up *malediction*. If we should take a character of *Adam's* knowledge from the Scriptures, we shall find more imprudence charged upon him than upon any of his Successors: For, albeit the silly woman was not deceived without the help of subtilty; yet *Adam* sinned upon a bare suggestion, and thereafter was so simple, as to hide himself, when God called him to an account; as if a thicket of trees could have sconced him from his all-seeing Maker; and when he was accused, was so simple,

as to think his wives commands sufficient to exoner him; and so absurd, as to make God Himself sharer with him in his guilt, *the woman whom thou gavest me*, &c.

There is more charm in acquiring new knowledge, than in reflecting upon what we have already gain'd, (as if the *species* of known objects did corrupt, by being treasur'd up in our brains) And this induces me to believe, that our leanness of native knowledge, is rather a happiness than a punishment; the Citizens of *London* or *Paris* are not so tickled by the sight of those stately Cities, as strangers who were not born within them walls; and I may say to such, as, by spelling the Starrs, desire to read the fortunes of others, as our Saviour said to *Peter*, when he was desirous to know the horoscope of the beloved Apostle, *What is that to thee?* What can it advantage us to know the correspondence kept amongst the Planets, and to understand the whole

Anatomy

Anatomy of natures *Skeleton*; in gazing upon whose parts, we are oftimes as ridiculous as children, who love to leaf over tabdouce Pictures; for in both variety is all the usury that can be expected, as the return of our time and pains; and if we pry inly into this small mass of our present knowledge, we shall find, that our knowledge is one of the fertilest fountains of our misery: For, do not such as know that they are sick, groan more heavily than a Country Clown, who apprehends nothing till extremity creates in him some sense? And, doubtless the reason why children and ideots endure more, and drunken men escape more dangers than others, is because albeit they cannot provide such apt remedies, yet, they are less acquainted with what they feel than we are. Are not those who understand that they are affronted, more vexed than such as are ignorant of these misfortunes? And those who foresee the changes and revolutions,

which are to befall either their friends or their Countries, are thereby more sadly diseased, than he who sees no farther than his nose. Our Saviour wept when He did foresee, that one stone of *Jerusalem* should not be left upon another; and when *Hazael* askt *Elisha* why he wept, he told him, it was because he did foresee what mischief *Hazael* was to do in *Israel*. Let us not then complain of the loss of *Adam*'s knowledge, but of his innocency; we know enough to save us, and what is more than that that is superfluous.

Adam cannot be thought to have been the first sinner, for *Eve* sinned before him; So that albeit it seem a Paradox, yet it is most probable, that albeit *Adam* had for ever abstained from eating the *forbidden fruit*, his posterity had been still as miserable as now they are; seeing the guilt of either of the Parents had been sufficient to dash the innocence of the children. For, as the Scripture tells us, Who can bring a clean thing out

of

of an unclean? And *David*, in that Text, which of all others speaks most expresly of original sin, layes the guilt upon her, and confesseth only, that his mother had conceived him in sin.

As *Adam* was not the first sinner, so the eating of the Apple may be justly thought not to be the first sin; *Eve* having, before his eating the Apple, repeated most falsely the Command. For, whereas God did assure them, *that in that day they did eat the fruit they should surely dye*: *Eve* relates it thus, *Ye shall not eat the fruit, lest ye dye*, representing only that as a contingent which was most certain: and whereas God had only said, *ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree*, *Eve* says, *God said, ye shall not touch it*; which it may be furnished the serpent with this argument to cheat her; Ye see God hath deceived you, for the fruit may be touched without danger, why may it not be eaten without hazzard? and it is probable, that he hath failed in the one as well as in the other.

But

But to abstract from this, it cannot be said, that the eating of the *forbidden fruit* was the first sin; for, before *Adam* did eat thereof, he behoved both to believe the Serpent and misbelieve his Maker; and thus *misbelief* was the first sin: For after he had credited the Serpents report, he was no longer innocent, and so he did not eat the Apple till after his fall. What wiser are those Divines, who debate, whether *Adams* falling-sickness and sin had become hereditary, if our predecessors had come out of his loins before he sinned, than those who combated for the largest share of the King of *Spain's* gold, if it had been to be divided?

In the Almightys procedure against poor *Adam* for this crime, His infinite mercy appears to admiration; and God foreseeing, that man might sharpen the ax of justice too much upon the whetstone of private revenge, seems to have, in this process, formed to him, an exact modle of Inquisition

quiſition. For, He arraigns and cries *Adam, Adam, where art thou?* He ſhews him his dittay, *Haſt thou eat of the fruit whereof I commanded thee that thou ſhouldeſt not eat?* He allows him exculpation, *Who told thee?* and in order thereto, did examine the woman, upon whom *Adam* did transfer the guilt. And albeit nothing could eſcape His omniſciency, and that He did ſee *Adam* eat the Apples yet, to teach Judges that they ſhould walk according to what is proved, and not according to what they are themſelves conſcious to, He did not condemn him till firſt he ſhould have a confeſſion from his own mouth. And thus, *Gen.* 18. 21. the Lord ſayes, *Becauſe the cry of* Sodom *is great——I will go down and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it*, &c. And in the laſt place, albeit the fatal decree did bear, *In that day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die*; yet, were his days prolonged nine hundred and thirty years after

after the sin was commited. It is too curious a disquisition to enquire how God can be said to be merciful, mercy being the mitigation of justice; of which His pure nature cannot be capable, seeing whatever He wills is just: And so He cannot be thought, in any thing which He wills, to recede from justice: and so can no more properly be said to be merciful, than one Act can be both the Law and the mitigation of the Law. But I will press no point of this nature, knowing that humble modesty is the best Theology.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Stile of Genesis.

THe *Vatican* of Paganism cannot, for the maleness of it's stile, match that matchless Book of *Genesis*, whereof each sentence seems a quarry of rich meditations, and each word a spell, sufficient to conjure the Devil of

of *Delphos*. Might not that excellent expreſſion, *Let us make man after our image*, convince any of the Being of a Trinity, who deny plurality of Gods? It is wonderful, that the Saturn-humor'd Jew can, in this paſſage, miſ-take his own Saviour; and it is ſtrange that he ſhould not, from the triangular architecture of his own heart, conclude the Trinity of the God-head, whoſe temple it was appointed to be. Albeit I be an admirer of this nurſe of Cabaliſm; yet, I approve not the conceit of thoſe doting Rabbies, who teach that God, from His own mouth, indited both the words and matter of the *Pentateuch*; whereas, He furniſhed only to the other Prophets the matter and ſubject unphraſed: for, not only did God promiſe, that he ſhould put His words in their mouths, but likewiſe, they preface thus their own prophecies, In the days of ſuch a King, the Word of the Lord came to ſuch a Prophet, ſaying,

saying, *&c.* Neither is this conceit consistent with that high esteem, which they, (even in this) intend for their patron, *Moses*; seeing it allows him less trust from his divine Master, than the other Penmen of Scripture had reposed in them.

CHAP. XVIII.

Why Man fell.

THat brain hath too little *pia mater*, that is too curious to know why God, who evidences so great a desire to save poor man, and is so powerful as that his salvation needed ever have run the hazzard, if His infinite wisdom had so decree'd, did yet suffer him to fall. For, if we exempt the list of that debate, our reason is too weak to bear the burden of so great a difficulty. And although it may be answered, that God might

might have reſtrained man, but that reſtraint did not ſtand with the freedom of man's will which God had beſtowed upon him; yet, this anſwer ſtops not the mouth of the difficulty. For certainly, if one ſhould detain a mad man from running over a precipice, he could not be thereby ſaid to have wronged his liberty: and ſeeing man is, by many Divines, allowed a freedom of will, albeit he muſt of neceſſity do what is evil, and that his freedom is ſalv'd by a liberty to chooſe only one of more evils, it would appear ſtrange why his liberty might not have conſiſted well enough with a moral impoſſibility of ſinning, and might not have been abundantly conſerved in his freedom to chooſe one of more goods: yet, theſe reaſonings are the calling God to an account; and ſo impious. For, if God had firſt created man ſurrounded with our preſent infirmities, could we have complained? Why then ſhould we now complain, ſeeing we

are but fall'n to a better estate than we deserved; seeing we stumbled not for want of light, but because we extinguish'd our own light; and seeing our Saviours dying for us may yet reinstate us in an happier estate than that from which we are now fall'n?

Albeit the glass of my years hath not yet turn'd five and twenty, yet the curiosity I have to know the different *limbo*'s of departed souls, and to view the card of the region of death, would give me abundance of coutage to encounter this King of terrors, though I were a Pagan: But, when I consider what joys are prepared for them who fear the Almighty; and what crasiness attends such as sleep in *Methusalem*'s Cradle, I pity them who make *long-life* one of the oftest repeated Petitions of their *Pater noster*; and yet, those sure are the more advanc'd in folly, who desire to have their names enshrin'd, after death, in the airy monument of *fame*: Whereas it is one of the promises made to the Elect, *That they shall rest*

from their labors, and their works ſhall follow them. Moſt mens mouths are ſo foul, that it is a puniſhment to be much in them: for my own part, I deſire the ſame good offices from any good name that I do from my cloaths; which is to skreen me from the violence of exteriour accidents.

As theſe Criminals might be judg'd diſtracted, who being condemned to die, would ſpend their ſhort reprival in diſputing about the ſituation and fabric of their gibbets: So may I juſtly think thoſe *literati* mad, who ſpend the ſhort time allotted them for Repentance, in debating about the ſeat of Hell, and the torments of tortur'd ſpirits. To ſatisfie my curiosity, I was once reſolv'd with the Platonic, to take the promiſe of ſome dying friend, that he ſhould return and ſatisfie me in all my private doubts concerning hell and heaven; yet I was juſtly afraid, that he might have return'd me the ſame anſwer which *Abraham* return'd to *Dives*, *Have they*

not Moſes *and the Prophets? if they hear not them, wherefore will they be perſuaded though one ſhould riſe from the dead?*

CHAP. XIX.

A Refutation of the Millenarians.

THe *Millenar*'s Ephimerides, which aſſure us, that Chriſt ſhall reign a thouſand years with the Saints on earth, is as ſenſual an opinion as that of the *Turks*, who make Heaven a brothel, wherein we ſhall ſatisfie our Venereous appetites; for the one ſhews the vain glory and vindictive humor of the Saints, as palpably as the other ſhews the luſt of the Mahumetans. If Chriſt's reigning ſo many years be for convincing the world that he is the real *Meſſiah*, their hereſie ſhould have ante-dated his coming, and his reign ſhould rather have begun long ſince, when many ages were to be converted; or at leaſt it ſhould not have been thruſt out upon the ſelvage and border of

time

time, when very few ſhall remain to be convinc'd: and if in this they intend a diſplaying of Chriſt's glory, certainly they are miſtaken; for what honor can it be for a King, to have his foot-ſtool made his Throne? So that I think, theſe poor Phanatics have taken the patronage of this error rather by neceſſity than choice, all other opinions and conceits being formerly preengaged to other Authors.

CHAP. XX.

The Author's Cenſure of this Eſſay, and an Account of his Deſign.

AS I am not able, by the *Jacob's ladder* of my merits, to ſcale Heaven; ſo am I leſs able, by the *Jacob's ſtaff* of my private ability, to take up the true altitude of its myſteries. I have travel'd no farther in

Theology than a *Sabbath-days* journey; and therefore, it were arrogance in me to offer a map of it to the credulous world: But, if I were worthy to be consulted in these spiritual securities, I should advise every private Christian; rather to stay still in the barge of the Church, with the other Disciples, than by an ill bridled zeal, to hazard drowning alone with *Peter*, by offering to walk upon the unstable surface of his own fleeting and water-weak fancies, though with a pious resolution to meet our Saviour. For, albeit one may be a real Christian, and yet differ from the Church, which says, that the wise men who came to bow before our Saviour's Cradle-throne, were three Kings, and in such other opinions as these, wherein the fundamentals of faith and quiet of the Church are no ways concerned; yet certainly, he were no wise man himself, nor yet sound Christian, who would not, even in these, lower the flag of his pri-

vate opinion to the commands of the Church. The Church is our Mother, and therefore we ſhould wed no opinion without her conſent who is our Parent; or if we have raſhly wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and her Officials to grant us a divorce. As for my ſelf, my vanity never prompted me to be ſtandard-bearer to any, either new Sect, or old Hereſie; and I pity ſuch as love to live like Pew-keepers in the Houſe of God, buſied in ſeating others, without ever providing a room for themſelves. If there be any thing in this Diſcourſe which may offend ſuch as are really pious, it ſhall much grieve me, who above all men honour them moſt. What I have ſpoken againſt caſes of Conſcience and the like, ſtrikes not againſt their Chriſtian fellowſhip and correſpondence, but againſt the apiſh fopperies of pretending counterfeits. It ſhall always be my endeavour, for the future, rather to drop tears for my own ſins and the

ſins of others, then yrk for their converſion: our prayers help ſuch as never heard them, whereas thoſe only who read our diſcourſes are better'd by them. *Abraham's* prayers prevailed more with God (even for *Sodom*) than *Lot's* reitterated Sermons; and no wonder that the ſucceſs be unequal, ſeeing in the one we have to do with a merciful God; whereas in the other we muſt perſuade a hard-hearted people.

I intend not to purchaſe, from poſterity, the title of *Reformer*, ſeeing moſt of theſe have fall'n under the ſame guilt; and have had the ſame fate, with that curious Painter; who having drawn an excellent *face*, as happily as could have been expected from the ſmootheſt mirror, did thereafter daſh it afreſh upon the ſuggeſtion of each intrant, till at laſt he reformed it from being any way like to the Original.

Divinity differs in this from all other Sciences, that theſe being inven-

ted by mortals, receive growth from time and experience; whereas, it being penn'd by the omniſcient Spirit of God, can receive no addition without receiving prejudice. It is moſt remarkable, that our Saviour's Prayers, His Sermons and the *Creed*, delivered to us by his Apoſtles, were roomed up in far narrower bounds than theſe of our times, which an hydropſie of ill concocted opinions hath ſwell'd beyond their true dimenſions: many whereof have either been brooded by *vanity* or *intereſt*; or elſe ignorant and violent defendents being brought to a bay, by ſuch as impugn'd their reſolv'd-upon principles, have been forc'd to aſſert theſe by-blow and preter-intentional *tenets*; and having once floored them have thereafter judg'd themſelves concerned to defend them, in point of Scholaſtic honor. Some well-meaning Chriſtians likewiſe, do ſometimes, for maintenance of what is lawful and pious, think, that they may lawfully

advance

advance opinions, which otherwise they would never have allowed of; and as in nature we see, that the collision of two hard bodies makes them rebound so much the farther from one another: So opposition makes both parties fly into extremities. Thus I believe, that the debate betwixt *Roman-Catholics* and *Protestants*, concerning the Virgin *Mary*, have occasion'd, in some amongst both, expressions, if not heretical, yet at least indecent. Thus a great many *Confessions of Faith* become, like *Noah*'s Ark, a receptacle of clean and unclean: and which is also deplorable, they do, like ordinary Dyals, serve only for use in that one meridian for which they are calculated, and by riding twenty miles ye make them heterodox. I speak not this to the disparagement of our own Church, (which I reverence in all its Precepts and Practices) but to beget a blushing conviction in such as have diverted from it; and whose Conventicles,

compared

compared with our *Jerusalem*, resemble only the removed huts of those who live apart, because they are sick of the Plague.

I am not at a mate, to see men so tenacious of contrary principles in Religion; for, man's thoughts being vast and various, he snatches at every offered suggestion; and if by accident he entertain any of those many, as a divine immission, he thereafter thinks it were blasphemy to bring that thought to the Test of *reason*, because he hears that *faith* is above *reason*; or to relinquish it, because the common suffrage of his Country runs it counter, seeing he is taught even by them, that the principles of *belief* must not be chosen by the Pole.

And seeing *faith* is above *reason*, (albeit, as I said formerly, it would seem otherwise) I wonder not to see, even the best temper'd Christians, think that which is not their own religion to be therefore ridiculous.

My

My design all alongst this Discourse butts at this one principle, *that Speculations in Religion are not so necessary, and are more dangerous than sincere practice.* It is in Religion as in Heraldry, the simpler the Bearing be, it is so much the purer and the ancienter. I will not say that our School-distinctions are the impressions of the devils cloven foot; but I may say, that our piety and principles scarce ever grow after they begin to fork in such dichotomies; which, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, divide and jar as soon as they are born, and betwixt whom, the poor proposition, out of which both did spring, is, like a maletactor, most lamentably drag'd to pieces. I have endeavoured to demonstrate, that dogmaticalness and paralytic scepticisme, are but the *Apocrypha* of true Religion; and I believe the one begets the other, as a toad begets a Cockatrice. For the Sceptic perceiving, that the magisterial Dogmatist erres (as those must erre somewhere

where who assert too much) even in those things whereof he affirms, he is as sure as of any principle in Religion, (which is their ordinary stile) he finding out their error in one of their principles, is thereby embold'ned to to contravert all. This being the scope of this Essay, I wish that those who read, expound it as Divines do parables, *Quæ non sunt argumentativa, ultra suum scopum.*

CHAP. XXI.

The Author's Apology.

I Doubt not but some will think me no less absurd in writing against vanity, whilst I am so vain my self as to write Books, than the Philosophers were judged of old, for denying motion whilst their tongues mov'd in their cheeks; but, to these my answer shall be, that finding many groveling in their errors, I have, in this Essay,

Essay, proffer'd them my assistance; not to shew my *strength* but my *compassion.* The multitude (which albeit it hath ever been allowed many heads yet was never allowed any brains) will doubtless accuse my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations so excentric to my employment; to these my return is, that these papers are but the pairings of my other Studies; and because they were but pairings, I have flung them out into the streets. I wrote them in my retirements when I wanted both books and employment, and I resolve that this shall be the last intrade I shall ever make into forreign contemplations. There are some thoughts in this piece which may seem to rebell against the empire of the Schools: yet, who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the publick Clock of the City; especially where the sun of Righteousness hath not, by pointing clearly the dyal of Faith, shewed which of the two are in the error?

error? There are ſome expreſſions in it, which cenſure may force to ſpeak otherwiſe than they have in commiſſions; yet none of them got room in this Diſcourſe, until they firſt gave an account of their deſign to a moſt pious and learned Divine: and ſo, it may be the lines are of themſelves ſtreight, albeit they lye not paralled with each cenſurers crooked rule. As this Diſcourſe intends, for the Divines of our Church, all reſpects; ſo all that is in it, is moſt freely ſubmitted to their cenſure.

The Author intended this Diſcourſe only as an Introduction to the Stoics Morals, *but probably, he will, for many years, ſtop here.*

POSTCRIPT.

BY the Laws of this Country *p.* 52. and elſewhere, the Author means that Relgion which is ſetled by Law.

In other Expreſſions the Author recommends himſelf to the gloſs of the readers charity. The

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